

**Pentecostal Spirituality as Lived Experience:**  
**An Empirical Study of Women in the British Black Pentecostal Church**

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A thesis submitted to  
The University of Birmingham  
for the degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion  
College of Arts and Law  
University of Birmingham  
September 1, 2015

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## Abstract

This study's central thesis is based upon a qualitative research project which captured and analysed the focus group conversations of fifty-two Black British Pentecostal women of African - Caribbean heritage as they discuss their lived experience in terms of Christian spirituality. Practical Theology as a theologically normative discipline provides the lens through which to study spirituality as experience.

This thesis states that the lived experience of Black British Pentecostal women develops and informs *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* as part of a conscious and integrated lifestyle and further facilitates growth in a woman's relationship with God. The translation of the Hebrew term *yāda'* meaning 'to know' is relevant to this understanding, as it is interpreted as *to know by experience*.

*Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* is deduced as an aspect of African-Caribbean Christian Consciousness and the 'language of resistance'. Both constructs enabled the participants in a British context to redefine their social experience on their own terms. Further, Black British Pentecostal women's experience fills a gap in womanist and feminist literature on the subject of women's spirituality.

This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by its exploration of the spirituality of Black Caribbean Pentecostal women in Britain through empirical theological research methods. Its focus on Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience moves the discussion beyond the analysis of crisis events and the study of Pentecostal congregational worship.

## **Acknowledgements**

Words are not enough to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Mark Cartledge, who has been an invaluable support from the beginning and throughout this process, thank you!

To my husband, Dr Clifton Clarke, for being a sounding board, and children, Joel and Jessica: thank you for being excited, supportive and understanding; now I am looking forward to spending more time with you all.

Thank you to my mum, Mavis Chambers, and the women (and men) of the New Testament Church of God in England, who are the main inspiration for this study. These women modelled and taught me to love God, for which I will be forever grateful.

This thesis was lightly copy edited for conventions of language, spelling and grammar by Dr. Rona Johnston.

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## **Abbreviations**

|      |                                     |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| AIC  | African Instituted Church           |
| BBPW | Black British Pentecostal Women     |
| BMC  | Black Majority Church               |
| BMPC | Black Majority Pentecostal Church   |
| C&S  | Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim |
| NTCG | New Testament Church of God         |

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The study is based upon the ordinary theology of fifty-two female participants of African-Caribbean descent recruited from a purposive sample of three Black British Pentecostal Church (BBPC) as they discuss Pentecostal spirituality. The three churches, New Testament Church of God (NTCG), New Harvest Church, and Community Revival Fellowship, are located in and were founded by people of Caribbean descent the UK. NTCG and New Harvest Church belong to a denomination whilst Community Revival Fellowship is independent.<sup>1</sup> This introductory chapter presents the motivating factors behind this qualitative study, which is principally my observation and knowledge of the resilience and spiritual fortitude of the African-Caribbean women whom I grew up around, attributes that they credited to their relationship with God. I have sought to explore academically the basis of this tenacity, that ‘something’ which I term *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience*.

Following this introduction, the chapter continues with a section in which the definitions of key terms are discussed, specifically Black Majority Church, spirituality and spirituality as a lived experience. This is followed by a discussion focussing on the role of experience in Pentecostal praxis, specifically the crisis events of conversion and Baptism in the Holy Spirit with tongues. These crisis events and *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* are distinct and different but related. Finally I present the three constructs upon which I base my argument: empirical analysis of data, the work of Professor Sandra Schneiders and the Hebrew term for knowing God through experience, *yāda*’.

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<sup>1</sup> NTCG is a denomination of over 100 churches to protect the anonymity of the participants no reference is made to the specific location. Community Revival Fellowship and New Harvest Centre are pseudonyms.

## **1.1. Motivations for this Study**

While this study is motivated by a number of factors, two motivations are primary. First, I wish to pay tribute to the women (and men) of the BBPC who under harsh societal, economic and climatic conditions planted and nurtured Pentecostal churches from the seeds and seedlings of Pentecostal expression acquired in the Caribbean.<sup>2</sup> Second, as a third-generation Pentecostal female, I recognise a need to explore and document from the perspective of a critical insider that ineffable experience which this study designates as *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience*. That exploration, and particularly the analysis of focus group transcripts, suggests that the everyday life experience or lived experience of women which is filtered through their understanding of Pentecostalism is a key component of Pentecostal spirituality.

## **1.2. Definition of Terms**

### **1.2.1. Black Majority Church**

I understand the term Black Majority Church as a construct used primarily in Britain to define churches whose congregants hail from Africa or the African diaspora. Like other constructs used to identify and order race it is a term that has developed amid and due to social and political change in Britain. Below it is demonstrated that Black Church and its synonyms are applied and understood in different ways. As such I am in agreement with Black theologian Anthony Reddie who argues that the question of *Black Church* and its

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<sup>2</sup> The term Pentecostal designates a variety of Christian groups as well as a variety of Christian expressions and manifestations, particularly glossolalia and healing, but the churches referenced in this study are traditionally categorised as ‘classical’ Pentecostals, a term which is associated with ‘denominations that have codified beliefs through statements of faith and specific doctrines’. These churches trace their doctrinal origins back to Wesleyan and Holiness traditions.

definition is fraught with difficulties.<sup>3</sup> Questions of definition are less problematic in an American context because the Black church is an ‘ingrained, historical, theological, sociological and experiential reality’ based upon the racial structure and history of America, however in the Britain the understanding is different. Part of the issue, states Patrick Kalilombe, is the designation of ‘ethnic minority’ a category this he states was a classification ‘imposed’ on British Black people in the 1980s. It was states, anthropologist Nicole Toulis, introduced into public, political and academic discourse to identify ‘settlers’ in Britain.<sup>4</sup> Right wing political affiliates understood the term ‘ethnic minority’ as a designation for ‘unwanted cultural and racial aliens’.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand as officially acceptable discourse, continues Toulis, the term promulgated a model of a ‘multiracial society’ founded on ‘good race relations’.<sup>6</sup> Herein lies one of the difficulties Reddie is referencing. Patrick Kalilombe argues that concurrent with the introduction of ‘ethnic minority’ white-led churches ‘imposed’ the term *Black Christianity* and *Black church* on Black Christians much to the consternation and disapproval of Black Majority church leaders of the time.<sup>7</sup> Anthony Reddie takes ownership of the imposition by using the nomenclature of *Black church* to classify churches rather than persons of colour. Reddie’s categories consists of Classical Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal and Black majority populace in white historic denominations.<sup>8</sup>

Pentecostal scholar Amos Yong uses the term Black Pentecostal and AfroPentecostalism synonymously to refer to what he sees as ‘the world Pentecostal

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<sup>3</sup> Anthony Reddie, *Black Theology in Transatlantic Dialogue* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 47-48.

<sup>4</sup> Nicole Toulis, *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 11.

<sup>5</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Patrick, Kalilombe, ‘Black Christianity in Britain.’ *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20, no. 2 (1997): 306–324. (306)

<sup>8</sup> Reddie, *Black Theology in Transatlantic Dialogue*, 48.

phenomenon involving contemporary Africans and those with African ancestors'.<sup>9</sup> In his article he is unapologetically less concerned with terms and more concerned with the contribution Afropentecostalism can and should make to global Pentecostal theology. For Yong at the time of the article Afropentecostalism was not acknowledged by the wider Pentecostal academic community as much as it should be.<sup>10</sup> Babatunde Adedibu uses the term Black Church as an nomenclature under which early Pentecostals such as Thomas Brem Wilson, a Ghanaian who pastored a Pentecostal congregation in London around 1907 are categorised.<sup>11</sup> He uses the classification to include 'heroes of the faith' i.e. notable Christians from Africa and the African diaspora. His classification further includes churches formed by the Windrush Generation, African Spiritual churches and the more recent African Pentecostal Churches.

In a chapter titled 'What on Earth is a Black Majority Church' Mark Sturge former General Director of the now dissolved African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance uses the term 'Black Majority church' under which he identifies 'five segments', Churches emerging from the African Caribbean diaspora; Churches emerging from the African diaspora; Black Majority Churches within the historic denominations; Black Majority Churches within white Pentecostal denominations; African and Caribbean Spiritual churches.<sup>12</sup> Such churches are worshipping Christian communities comprised of fifty per cent or more people of African or African-Caribbean descent.<sup>13</sup> Sturge argues that this term takes the focus from the leadership

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<sup>9</sup> Amos Yong, 'Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded: Afropentecostals and the Task of World Pentecostal Theology Today', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15, no. 1 (October 2006): 127-147. (see footnote 6) ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed March 6, 2016)

<sup>10</sup> Amos Yong, 'Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded', 127 - 147

<sup>11</sup> Babatunde Adedibu, *Coat of Many Colours: the Origin, Growth, Distinctiveness and Contributions of Majority Black Churches to British Christianity* (Gloucester: Wisdom Summit, 2012), 26-29.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Sturge, *Look What the Lord has Done! An Exploration of Black Christian Faith in Britain* (Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2005), 53.

<sup>13</sup> Sturge, *Look What the Lord has Done*, 31.

– as in the term ‘Black –led’ church - and places it on to the congregation, second it crosses denominational and theological lines and in so doing provides a of focus of unity. However the designation Black Majority church can suggest a homogeneity that does not exist. Not all of these churches self-identify as Pentecostal even though they may share similar practices. A number churches that are referred to by this term have emerged from a variety of historical, theological and ecclesiological roots. In the 1950’s these churches were almost exclusively attended by Black Caribbeans and were for the most part extensions of the churches that they belonged to in the Caribbean.

This section has attended to the way BMC is understood. Notwithstanding the role of churches founded or attended by Africans this work will use the term Black Church and Black Majority Church (BMC) and BBPC to refer churches founded in Britain by African-Caribbeans, any reference to churches other that African-Caribbean will be made explicit.

### **1.2.2. Spirituality**

From a child to early adulthood my ‘spirituality’ was developed under the care and supervision of the ‘mothers’ of NTCG.<sup>14</sup> The mothers had been born in the Caribbean and had migrated to England partly at the behest of the Mother Country, which had need of workers to help rebuild her in the wake of the Second World War. Primarily they came to

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<sup>14</sup> Church mothers are women who are experienced Christians. Within the churches in this study they informally help members to develop in their Christian faith as well as providing general support and care in other areas of life (See Nicole Toulis, *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England*, Oxford: Berg, 1997, 246-50). NTCG has its inception and doctrinal roots in the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). NTCG began in England 1953, when its founder, Oliver Lyesight (1919–2006) established the first congregation in Wolverhampton. Lyesight, who was invited to preach at various congregations including the Assemblies of God, founded the church due to the newly arrived migrants ‘drifting away and backsliding’.

England to pursue better opportunities than were afforded them in the Caribbean.<sup>15</sup> The mothers would encourage young and not-so-young to pray, to read the Bible and to attend church services. They nominated individuals for positions on the Family Training Hour committee, youth board, and evangelism board.<sup>16</sup> They suggested individuals who would be good speakers, singers, or secretaries for a convention or in a local church service.<sup>17</sup> They made sure young women did their time in the convention kitchen, where they helped to cook for convention attendees. In the kitchen the mothers would sweat, work, laugh, tell stories and occasionally gently chide those they mothered for not cutting the cabbage in the right way; young women quickly learned who was in control! However these relationships were not primarily about power, for within this context and through these activities fundamentals of faith and aspects of culture, tradition, language and folklore were shared, whilst at the same time esoteric moral values and standards were delineated and reinforced.<sup>18</sup> Hence spirituality was a matter not just for the prescribed practices of the church but also for daily life occurrences.

These experiences and, more specifically, these women greatly impacted my view of the Pentecostal church and my formation as an adherent. However despite the important contributions made by women to individual lives but more so to religious movements in general and to Pentecostalism in particular, they have been overlooked and left under-

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<sup>15</sup> Mike Phillip and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-racial Britain* (Harper Collins: London, 1998), 63.

<sup>16</sup> Family Training Hour was typically a mid-week service where members would have an opportunity to sing, exhort or lead services. Members and friends of the church would be divided into opposing teams. The teams would compete in Bible quizzes and in trying to collect more 'offering' than the other.

<sup>17</sup> Pentecostal churches would join together with other churches inside and outside the denomination for joint worship services, normally called conventions.

<sup>18</sup> Elaine Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid of the Black Churches in Britain,' in *Refusing Holy Orders: Women and Fundamentalism in Britain*, ed. Gita Sahgal and N. Yuval-Davis (London: Virago Press, 1992), 50.



researched by academia.<sup>19</sup> An example of an ‘important’ contribution is found in the life of William Seymour, to whom – in North America at least – Pentecostalism’s genesis and initial growth is attributed. Seymour was ‘touched in his youth by a woman who had a gift; then recommended by a second woman to a third who actually provided him with a place to exercise his call’.<sup>20</sup> Seymour’s story and my own story both mirror the narratives of many in the Pentecostal church who were ‘touched’ in various ways by women. Despite their personal, economic and discriminatory struggles, these mothers did not allow their spiritual daughters and sons to see them succumb, and would share their difficult situations only after the fact. Through their public and private testimonies these women shared their lived experience of God’s provision of money, food and employment for them and for their families.<sup>21</sup> This engagement highlights another point: not only has the influence and experience of women been overlooked, but because those experiences do not fall in the category of prescribed religion, their experiences have also been deemed non-religious and therefore judged to be of less importance.

Yet Black women’s experiences *are* important for further study, and can provide access to much more of their identity. Valentina Alexander asserts that a Black woman’s character is largely formed by her life experiences, holistically, that would include her spiritual experiences and their subsequent interpretation.<sup>22</sup> A Black woman’s spirituality, continues Alexander, is integral to who she is, that is, to her character, and her character is

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<sup>19</sup> Nicola Slee, *Women’s Faith Development: Patterns and Processes* (Hants: Ashgate, 2004), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), 121.

<sup>21</sup> It is common practice in empirical research which involves human participants for the researcher to present her or his motivations for and relationship to the group under study.

<sup>22</sup> Valentina Alexander, ‘A Mouse in a Jungle: the Black Woman’s Experience in the Church and Society in Britain,’ in *Reconstructing Womanhood, Reconstructing Feminism: Writings on Black Women*, eds. D. Jarrett-Macauley (London: New York: Routledge, 1996), 85.

formed by experience. Here, then, is the explanation for the focus of this study and its exploration of spirituality (Pentecostal) as it is formed from lived experience. Experience, of which spiritual experience is a part, informs identity and character. It is by examining the experience of BBPW that this study will gain insight into Pentecostal spiritual experience. This exploration is necessary because the Black woman's experience is for the most part overlooked, regularly subsumed under the experience of Black males, white females and white males. Too little is known of the spiritual or experiential areas of the Black woman's life. In bringing to the fore the lived experience of Black British Pentecostal Women (hereafter BBPW), this study documents and pays tribute to the experiences of Black women in general and Pentecostal women in particular. By so doing an insight into their spirituality, which is formed outside of church based worship and rites, is constructed.

### **1.2.3. Pentecostal Spirituality as Lived Experience: A Sensitizing Concept**

So far I have used 'spirituality' to refer to a number of practices, including 'Bible reading', the 'prescribed practices of the church' and 'life experience'. I suggest that spirituality is all this and more. Chapter five presents some of the current discussions that surround defining the term spirituality. As background to the present discussion, however, let us consider here how understandings of spirituality can vary.

From the seventeenth century and up until Vatican II, Roman Catholics used 'spirituality' in reference to those who focused on prayer and the interior life. Post-Vatican II some groups took a broader approach, one that encompassed prayer and an intensified faith life that embraced daily living. A third group concerned with both these elements included within faith life all personal experiences, including those of the body and emotions, aspects of the self that were denigrated by Roman Catholic theology and morality; spirituality for this group was holistic or bodily. Yet another group incorporated a Christian commitment to

social and political life, aligning spirituality with ‘the processes of creation, the protection of environment, the struggle for justice, and the building of a better world’.<sup>23</sup> Although Roman Catholics were more embracing of the term, Protestants were wary of the term ‘spirituality’ because of its connections to enthusiasm and mysticism; their preference was for terms such as ‘piety’ and ‘perfection’. They began to embrace, however, the Roman Catholic interior life with its exterior ramifications while expanding the meaning and application of the term ‘spirituality’ to include contributions from their own Protestant tradition.<sup>24</sup>

This short overview of the application of the term has been confined to its use in the ecclesial context, which historically has largely been its setting. In contemporary popular usage, however, spirituality is no longer only associated with the Christian church but is now used in multi-faith, humanistic and secular contexts, as I explore further in chapter five.

This study adopts the expression *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* and utilises that idea as a *sensitizing concept*. A sensitizing concept is not fully definable, nor does it have fixed benchmarks. Explicit definitions with definite benchmarks are indicative of *definitive concepts*, a category that does not cover the present concept.<sup>25</sup> As a sensitizing concept *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* can provide, however, a general sense of and guidance to the focus area, steering the researcher to where instances may be found, ‘rather than provid[ing] descriptions of what to see’.<sup>26</sup> As a child and now as a researcher, I

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<sup>23</sup> Sandra Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality, Strangers, Rivals or Partners,’ *Horizons* 13, no. 2 (1986): 253-274 (254).

<sup>24</sup> Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?’ 255.

<sup>25</sup> See Herbert Blumer, ‘What is Wrong with Social Theory,’ *American Sociological Review* 19, no. 1 (Feb. 1954), 3-10.

<sup>26</sup> Will C. van den Hoonaard, ‘Sensitizing Concepts,’ in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given, (California: Sage, 2008), 2:812-814; R. Yin *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish* (New York: Guildford Press, 2011), 7; see Will C. van den Hoonaard, *Working with Sensitizing Concepts: Analytical Field Research* (California: Sage, 1997). Sensitizing concepts were developed by Herbert Blumer as a challenge to prevailing social theories which had no grounding in the empirical world. A sensitizing

had and now have a *sense* of what *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* is, and this sense is in part due to the narratives from my formative years. That sense is relatable via illustrations such as those given above and those shared during focus group discussions. To further illustrate, sensitizing concepts such as ‘culture’ and ‘institution’ similarly do not have clear-cut definitions and any attempt at explanation relies on exposition and illustrations that appeal to experience in order to convey a meaningful picture. I use the expression *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* in referring to that something which allows women to persevere, persist, and continue in the face of difficult situations.

### **1.3. Pentecostal Experience and Pentecostal Spirituality as Lived Experience**

Above I noted Alexander’s claim that life experience is integral to the character of the Black women. Similarly, I suggest that experience is integral to Pentecostalism, which cannot be fully understood without reference to its experiential dimension. While Alexander refers to the woman’s general life experience, Steven Land has noted in reference to the Christian life Pentecostal experience is focused on the crisis events of conversion and the baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues (here after Spirit-baptism).<sup>27</sup> Other examples of crises or interventions of God include sanctification, healing and calls to ministry, interventions which Land has termed ‘present manifestations of the life of the coming Kingdom’.<sup>28</sup>

Pentecostalism’s experiential dimension has its roots in the Wesleyan-holiness tradition with its understanding that conversion is followed by baptism of the Holy Spirit also known as second blessing or sanctification (a two-stage process), terms used to designate the

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concept is a starting point which allows the researcher to think about a class of data for which she has no definite idea and provides the initial guide for the research.

<sup>27</sup> Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 71.

<sup>28</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 71.

crisis event which occurs subsequent to conversion.<sup>29</sup> The Holiness movement understood sanctification to be biblical, and essential if a ‘victorious life’ was to be maintained.<sup>30</sup> The battle was with sin and the prize the maintenance of a holy heart and life, which could be won because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Keswick movement in Britain also recognised two distinct events, one being conversion and the other the ‘fullness of the Spirit’, which was understood, however, in terms of holiness. The teachings of South African Andrew Murray Jr, a Reformed teacher, influenced the Keswick teaching of sanctification. Murray believed and taught that sanctification was a progressive process and not a crisis event, and by the end of the nineteenth century the ‘fullness of the Spirit’ was no longer understood as holiness but as power for service.<sup>31</sup>

Early Holiness preachers and later Pentecostals proclaimed a third experience, Baptism of the Holy Spirit (three stage).<sup>32</sup> This third experience was distinct, understood as an ‘endowment of power for proclamation and demonstration of the gospel’. The evidence of this power or Spirit-baptism was the ability to speak in an unlearned language (tongues).<sup>33</sup> These experiences often occurred in the context of an ‘emotionally charged and free flowing worship service’ and were described as evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>34</sup>

As the Pentecostal movement developed, Spirit-baptism came to be perceived as the last rung on the ‘ladder of Pentecostal experience’. For those who had transferred from a

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<sup>29</sup> Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26; Allan Heaton Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 51.

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2009), 19-20.

<sup>31</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 28.

<sup>32</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 27; Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 50.

<sup>33</sup> Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Parker, *Led By the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 21.

Holiness church to a Pentecostal church and for those Holiness churches that became Pentecostal, this addition was an important spiritual milestone because these groups had already experienced the first two crisis events, but now for the first time speaking tongues provided audible proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit in an individual's life, and over time Spirit-baptism was prioritised over baptism in the Holy Spirit (sanctification).<sup>35</sup> That prioritization was also a product of the teaching and influence of William Durham. Durham insisted that sanctification as a 'second work of grace' was not scriptural and advocated that Christ has provided for sanctification in the atonement. This meant that an individual upon identifying with Christ was sanctified upon conversion what came to be known as the doctrine of 'Finished Work', Durham advocated a two stage process, justification and Spirit-baptism.<sup>36</sup> This position was adopted by the Keswick Movement, the Assemblies of God and, later, Oneness Pentecostals. The Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee), the Church of God in Christ and Pentecostal Holiness continued to teach the three stages.

The doctrine of Spirit-baptism with speaking in tongues flourished and took pre-eminence even though early witnesses affirmed that fewer than half of new converts spoke in tongues. Further, in the early years of the movement, the teachings and publications of churches such as Church of God in Christ (COGIC) and a number of other Pentecostal groups prioritised healing and mission over speaking in tongues. Nonetheless, speaking in tongues became and remains the attribute most readily identified with Pentecostals and Pentecostalism.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 40.

<sup>36</sup> Allan Anderson, 'Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions' in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre Droogers, and Cornelis Van der Laan (Berkeley; London: University of California, 2010), 17.

<sup>37</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 41-42.

Even though sanctification as a crisis event has given way to Spirit-baptism, Classical Pentecostal churches include *subsequent* sanctification in their statements of faith.<sup>38</sup> Forty of the participants in this study are members of New Testament Church of God (NTCG), an affiliate of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). The denomination's *Declaration of Faith* clearly states a belief:-

In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost.

In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.

In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.<sup>39</sup>

Based on Alexander's premise that a Black woman is a product of her life experience, we can say that these crisis events in life of the BBPW constitute experience and therefore contribute to the make-up of the Pentecostal woman. However, analysis of the data from this study leads me to argue for the significance of another aspect of Pentecostal experience or way of living, for which I utilise the sensitizing concept of *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience*; here we have not a crisis event but an all-encompassing way of life for BBPW.<sup>40</sup> *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* includes practices that are part of corporate worship as well as practices that take place outside the corporate worship experience, practices that include the challenges and victories of life, the joys as well as the pains. During the focus group discussions, Pentecostal spirituality seemed almost tangible when the women shared their stories of victory over depression, overcoming the grief of divorce and dealing with racism and discrimination, which upon self-evaluation made them qualitatively better people.<sup>41</sup> Such

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<sup>38</sup> See Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, p. 214.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>40</sup> Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology* (London: T&T. Clark, 2008), 256.

<sup>41</sup> Meredith B McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 13.

accounts support an understanding of Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience. The women faced these situations as Pentecostals, that is, with implicit awareness of the power of the Holy Spirit, who helps them to deal with the situations they come up against.

I argue that the crisis event of conversion is the catalyst for *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience*. Following conversion the Pentecostal woman's life is lived in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and her way of life is filtered through that lens. The genesis and development of *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* is part, however, of the integrated lifestyle that forms everyday life. Further, that Pentecostal spirituality is developed with the practices of Bible reading, prayer, corporate worship, community and tongue speaking. Further still, *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* develops from life situations but can also inform life experiences, which in turn further facilitates growth in a woman's relationship with God. The Hebrew root term *yāda* ' , which can be translated as 'to know' , is relevant to this understanding, as it is interpreted as *to know by experience*. It is through her experience, the woman *knows* God.

My understanding of *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* is grounded upon three constructs. The first of these constructs is formed by the analysis of responses gathered from inductive empirical research and the ordinary theology of the BBPW. The second is Sandra Schneiders' definition of spirituality as 'the experience of involvement in the project of life integration through self-transcendence towards the ultimate value one perceives'.<sup>42</sup> Schneiders' explication of spirituality does not limit religious experience to only those occurrences that are typically deemed religious or spiritual but recognises the human being holistically, acknowledging psychological, political, and social aspects as integral to human life and experience. A BBPW lived experience *is* her spirituality if her way of living is

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<sup>42</sup> Sandra Schneiders, 'Religion and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?' Public Lecture, Santa Clara Lecture, Santa Clara University (6 Feb. 2000, Vol. 6 No. 2), 4.



deliberate, conscious and consistent, oriented beyond purely private satisfaction towards the ultimate good, which for the Christian is God as expressed in Jesus of Nazareth. This deliberate way of living, which brings her growth, is, then, Christian spirituality.<sup>43</sup> What makes that spirituality Pentecostal are the three experiences which are distinctive of Pentecostalism, namely crisis conversion, sanctification and baptism in the Holy Spirit. The third construct, already referred to above, the Hebrew understanding of *yāda'*, will be discussed further in chapter seven.

To summarise, then, this study explores *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* as an impetus and all-encompassing aspect of BBPW's everyday life. It keeps these women persevering, persisting, and continuing physically and growing emotionally and spiritually whilst they encourage others to be the best they can be despite the difficulties they themselves face in everyday life. By exploring BBPW's experience we can form an understanding of a woman's spirituality. To that end I employ empirical research methodology drawn from the wider discipline of practical theology, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

#### **1.4. Statement of the Problem**

Although there are three crisis 'experiences' in Pentecostalism, it is generally accepted that Pentecostal spirituality is more than this. Pentecostal charismatic scholars have attended to the place of rites, encounter and the affections in Pentecostal spirituality, with their focus primarily on the corporate worship setting. These studies have overlooked both the place of lived experience and its relationship to Pentecostal spirituality and also how this experience relates to the majority of its members who are female. Lived experience is distinct from the

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<sup>43</sup> Schneiders, 'Religion and Spirituality,' 4.

beliefs and practices prescribed by the official church, for the term refers to the actual life experience of 'religious' persons.<sup>44</sup> Although lived experience is individual, it does not have to be subjective, as is evident in the case of BBPW, whose religious world is constructed with the sharing of intersubjective realities.<sup>45</sup>

I argue that lived experience is central to Pentecostal spirituality and utilise as a foundation of this study Sandra Schneiders' broad definition of spirituality, referred to above, as 'the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life integration through self-transcendence towards the ultimate value one perceives'.<sup>46</sup> To reiterate, this definition acknowledges life experiences as spiritual, but places them within the parameters of an integrated way of living. Therefore, neither isolated spontaneous occurrences nor unrelated collections of episodes are classed as spiritual; 'spiritual' experiences should occur as part of a deliberate, conscious and consistent way of living.<sup>47</sup> Further the experience should not lead to introspection for purely private satisfaction but project towards the 'ultimate good' which for the BBPW is God as revealed in his Son Jesus. God, the ultimate value, entices the person towards growth, and hence the spiritual life is intrinsically dynamic.

Schneiders not only identifies spirituality as lived experience but is a proponent of Spirituality as a unique academic discipline, not simply a sub-discipline of theology. This discipline is relatively new, but it encompasses this current study.<sup>48</sup> As a discipline

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<sup>44</sup> McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 12. Meredith McGuire uses the term *lived religion*.

<sup>45</sup> McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Schneiders, 'Religion and Spirituality,' 4.

<sup>47</sup> Sandra Schneiders, 'Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed. Arthur Holder (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 17.

<sup>48</sup> Despite conceptual difficulties, spirituality has been variously defined, with definitions ranging from the non-religious secularised to humanistic to the orthodox religious. This work - while acknowledging the range meanings and beliefs - refers to Christian spirituality in general and Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality in particular, and all references to spirituality are as such. Bruce Lescher and Elizabeth Liebert, *Exploring Christian Spirituality: Essays in Honor of Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM*, (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2006). The

Spirituality provides a framework for studying the ‘specific’, whether the text, person, spiritual tradition or elements of spiritual experience. The object of study and the discipline’s focus is ‘lived religious experience’. Further the discipline provides a hermeneutical approach to the study of spirituality which is composed of three phases: description of the object under investigation, analysis leading to explanation and evaluation and, finally, appropriation of the meaning of the experience for the individual. As an academic discipline, Spirituality adopts any methodology that is relevant to the field being studied; as such it is a ‘field encompassing field’.<sup>49</sup> The adoption of a practical theological approach is not in conflict with the discipline. However, while that breadth is useful, the discipline is still very much under construction.

### **1.5. Research Aims and Objectives**

This study explicates the features of BBPW’s spirituality as lived experience using an inductive empirical methodology. The desired outcome is a model of Pentecostal spirituality which gives credence to the lived experience of BBPW. This aim leads to a series of specific research questions: first, what is the nature of the experiential dimension of Pentecostalism in the lives of BBPW? Second, what are the features of the BBPW’s spirituality? And, finally, how might the lived experience of BBPW contribute to an understanding of Pentecostal spirituality?

Guided by these main research questions, this study provides an empirical exploration of the lived experience of BBPW. The lived experience of women in the form of ordinary theology is collected as data which is then analysed and subsequently placed in a discourse with historical, cultural and Pentecostal/charismatic theological sources. This practical

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introduction to this book provides an overview of Schneiders’ contribution to spirituality as an academic discipline.

<sup>49</sup> Sandra M. Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ in *Modern Christian Spirituality: Methodological and Historical Essays*, ed. Bradley Hanson (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990), 32.

theological method locates the experiences of women in general and Black women in particular in the foreground, identifying their experiences as a basis for understanding Pentecostal spirituality. This engagement is important for the study of Pentecostalism, and for Black British Pentecostalism in particular, of which women compose the majority of the membership and to whose development women have contributed.

### **1.6. The Nature and Limitations of the Study**

Contextualised within and offered as practical theology, specifically empirical theology as a practical-theological approach, this study utilises inductive qualitative empirical data collection methods. Practical theology's concern is with the relationship between belief and practice, and although there are a number of models available to explore this relationship, this study is informed by the 'praxis model' or 'pastoral cycle'. This pastoral cycle model emerged out of the political theologies of liberation and its focus is 'the experience of the situation or concrete reality that moves subsequently to theological reflection'.<sup>50</sup>

This study faced a number of challenges including limited literature available that relates specifically to Black British women of Caribbean heritage, their experience of migration to Great Britain during the post war years and their Pentecostal experience.<sup>51</sup> Another associated challenge is found in the androcentric nature of the available Pentecostal literature. Pentecostal scholar Allan Anderson states that despite the major contribution of women to the Pentecostal movement their contribution has been 'ignored overlooked or

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<sup>50</sup> Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 6; Mark Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 2.

<sup>51</sup> Valentina Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle: The Black Woman's Experience in the Church and Society in Britain,' in *Reconstructing Womanhood, Reconstructing Feminism: Writings on Black Women*, ed. D. Jarrett-Macauley (London: New York: Routledge, 1996), 85.

minimized'.<sup>52</sup> He continues, that in general as historians 'select, sift and arrange their evidence' their biases and presuppositions are brought to bear on their production of history, the writing of Pentecostal history is in no way exempt.<sup>53</sup> Salmon- Reid appeals for a place at the 'theological table' for the experience of Caribbeans, he bemoans that even womanist writinh with its platform of representing 'Black women' has neglected to include what he terms the female 'Caribbean Diasporian Experience'. This, despite stating its willingness to discourse with a variety of voices including white women, males and Africans yet he states Caribbean Diasporian voices are not included in the list.

Elizabeth Brusco used a number of academic on-line search engines to ascertain by decade the number of publications on 'women' and 'Pentecostalism' since 1970. For the 1970s World-Cat produced 4 hits, in the 1980s 29 hits in the 1990s 54 hits at the time of writing the chapter there were 63 books and theses on gender or women in Pentecostalism.<sup>54</sup> She concedes she could have searched using terms such as 'charismatic, pentecostal (sic), fundamentalist' or other allied terms. Alternatively she states research on women may have be hidden under topics such as marriage, kinship or family. Whatever the case, she argues, this is a portrayal of the elusiveness of the research object 'Pentecostal'. She observes that since beginning research on gender and Pentecostalism in the 1980s there has been a steady growth in scholarly interest across the disciplines. Anderson states that historians are attempting to correct errors that have been made in their lack of attention to the contribution of women to Pentecostalism. In his book *Spreading Fires* Anderson demonstrates a

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<sup>52</sup> Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007), 6.

<sup>53</sup> Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5.

<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth Brusco 'Gender and Power', in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre Droogers, and Cornelis Van der Laan (London: University of California, 2010, 74-75.

commitment to this by including a segment titled ‘Women in Ministry’ and throughout the volume he has attended to the contribution of female figures to the Pentecostal movement.

It should be acknowledged here that studies conducted on the life and practices of African Initiated Churches (AIC) may not appear in searches for Pentecostals. AIC’s origins are traced back to Africa particularly Southern (Zionist), East (Aburoho) and West Africa (Aludora/sunsumsore).<sup>55</sup> Anderson states that the churches emerged in response to colonial Protestantism. Their message and practice was more relevant to the spiritual needs of Africans what is known as an Africanization of Christianity.<sup>56</sup> Despite having an emphasis on the Spirit, prayer, healing, prophetism, angelic supernaturalism, speaking in tongues and deliverance - which is in line with Pentecostal typography- AIC’s sometimes divergent biblical doctrines have to some minds caused the movement to straddle the Pentecostal line.<sup>57</sup> Anderson states that although some of the older ‘Spirit’ AIC’s, such as those in the studies examined below, may no longer be paradigmatic of African Pentecostalism, they are an important expression.<sup>58</sup> Studies on AIC’s which have a gender focus to a greater or lesser extent include work by Deirdre Crumbley and Hermione Harris.<sup>59</sup> Crumbley’s work among three AIC’s is briefly discussed below. <sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 66.

<sup>56</sup> Adedibu, *Coat of Many Colours*, 65, 66; Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism*. Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007.161-162

<sup>57</sup> Adedibu, *Coat of Many Colours*, 67. Kalu presents an informative discussion on the issue of AIC’s and Pentecostalism in the “Mademoni: African-Instituted Churches in Pentecostal Rhetoric” in Kalu, Ogbu. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

<sup>58</sup> Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 105;

<sup>59</sup> Harris, Hermione. *Yoruba in Diaspora. An African Church in London*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 271-276.

### 1.6.1. How this Work Relates to other Studies in the Field

Much of the literature with which this study engages was produced by American scholars and relates to Latina, Euro-American and African-American female experience. Although I am aware that African-American women and Black British women share some commonalities in history and experience, they are not homogenous. Such literature serves to inform the discussion, but must be understood in the context for which it was intended. Additionally there is growing amount of research being produced by both African and non-African scholars regarding the burgeoning African church both in Africa and globally. These include work by Afe Adogame, Ogbu Kalu, Paul Gifford, Richard Burgess, Mercy Aduyoye and Brigid Sackey to name a few.<sup>61</sup> Below I share research from three female scholars Katrin Maier, Deidre Crumbley and Jane Soothill, their work intersects Pentecostalism and gender in relation to African Pentecostalism. Katrin Maier and Deidre Crumbley take an anthropological approach while Jane Soothill examines Ghanaian gender discourse from the vantage of religious studies.

Maier, a German, was raised she states ‘with strong conservative Pentecostal Christian values’ and grounds her research in anthropology. Her Ph.D. thesis *Redeeming London: Gender, Self and Mobility among Nigerian Pentecostals* is an ethnographic study researching the impact of Pentecostalism on the religious, family and work life of Redeemed Christian

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<sup>61</sup> Adogame, Afe. *The African Christian Diaspora. New Currents and Emerging Themes in World Christianity*. London Bloomsbury, 2013; Kalu, Ogbu. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; Burgess, Richard. *Nigeria's Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal Progeny 1967 – 2006*. Oxford: Regnum, 2008; Gifford, Paul. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004; Oduyoye, Mercy Amba. *Introducing African Women's Theology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 2001, Sackey, Brigid. *New Directions in Gender and Religion: The Changing Status of Women in African Independent Churches*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006.

Church of God members in London and Nigeria. Maier's work brings together the study of migration, Pentecostal Christianity and gender.<sup>62</sup>

Redeemed Christian Church of God in London originated in Nigeria and is currently one of Nigeria's largest denominations and is planting branches in many countries worldwide. Maier explores the negotiation of moral authority which she argues is articulated in gendered terms and is mediated and rendered meaningful by Pentecostal adherence. Utilizing gendering processes found in singlehood, marriage and child rearing her study explores Pentecostal authority.<sup>63</sup> Maier points out that a 'considerable body of literature' which focuses on 'migrant Christianity' has been produced, however such studies tend to discuss issues relating to the 'globality/locality of religious networks and communications, often neglecting the 'power dimensions in religious performance' which is her focus and contribution to the field.<sup>64</sup>

Nigerian Pentecostalism, states Maier, is a 'lived religion' which transcends the boundaries of the church building impacting 'seemingly non-religious areas of life'.<sup>65</sup> Further 'Pentecostalism is reproduced by people who apply doctrinal norms through practice to fulfil them in a discursive and bodily way. In this sense, what people *do to be* Pentecostal is not important per se but rather what they do *is recognized* as being Pentecostal in other words actions are 'Pentecostalised' which is embedded in power relations.

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<sup>62</sup> Katrin Maier, *Redeeming London: Gender, Self and Mobility among Nigerian Pentecostals* (Ph.D. diss., University of Sussex, 2011), 28. <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/43345/> (accessed February 12 2016)

<sup>63</sup> Maier, *Redeeming London*.

<sup>64</sup> Maier, "Redeeming London", 6.

<sup>65</sup> Maier, *Redeeming London*, 9.



Deidre Crumbley is an African-American whose Christian formation took place as part of a ‘small, inner-city, female founded “holy-sanctified” storefront church’.<sup>66</sup> The church’s beliefs and practices were an ‘interplay of plantation religion and the rise of Holiness-Pentecostalism’.<sup>67</sup> In her book *Africa and the Diaspora : Spirit, Structure, and Flesh : Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria* Crumbley situates her work in the discipline of anthropology and explores the roles of women in the Aladura Church (from *ala*, owners and *duura*, prayer). Her motivation for the study emerged from the similarities she perceived in the church she was raised in and the Aladura church. She specifically explores the symbols and rituals surrounding the constraints and opportunities faithful Aladura women navigate as they exercise leadership in their churches. Like Maier, Crumbley’s study is an ethnographic study primarily based on four years of field work conducted in the Yoruba town of Ibadan.<sup>68</sup> However her book develops over a twenty year span thereby she depicts not only ‘the ethnographic present’ but traces the ‘ongoing processes of change over time’.<sup>69</sup>

The quote below is taken from the AIC manifesto:-

We African Initiated Churches try to live Christianity with our own national clothing, in harmony with our own cultural heritage, seeking vehicles of worship that make the Christian faith alive to us as Africans. We have evolved our own liturgy and hymnology, our own doctrinal emphases. In yearning for spiritual satisfaction and psychosocial and emotional security, we re-introduced an emotional depth into Christianity.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Deidre Helen Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora : Spirit, Structure, and Flesh : Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria* (Madison, WI, USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 9. ( ProQuest ebrary. Web. Accessed 22 February)

<sup>67</sup> Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora*, 9.

<sup>68</sup> Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora*, 7.

<sup>69</sup> Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora*, 8.

<sup>70</sup> Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora*, 6.

However Crumbley questions the extent of the liberation, is it a liberation for all members? She asks ‘might this religious experience be gendered? If so how might having a female body shape the experience of worship and leadership?’<sup>71</sup> She addresses these questions by exploring the gender practices of three Aladura churches. Unlike earlier studies which focus on religious phenomenon, Crumbley’s work differs in three ways, first there is a consideration of Aladura symbolic content and its place in ‘patterns of meaning and ‘institutional fabric’, second she conducts a close and in-depth study of each church thereby allowing a comparison of ritual, symbol and organizational forms whilst exploring the diversity that exists.<sup>72</sup> Finally her work presents an understanding of the place of ritual and symbol in the shaping of gender practices. Crumbley offers her work as document to prepare American churches for ‘productive intercultural ecumenical dialogue’.<sup>73</sup> Her approach is informed by anthropology of religion, global studies and contemporary feminist thought. She is clear that her work is not theological, phenomenological nor historical but draws on the research material offered by these disciplines.<sup>74</sup>

Jane Soothill is a ‘white, Western (female)’ who situates her work titled, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, in religious studies.<sup>75</sup> Her research data is drawn from notes taken during two field work trips to Ghana where she regularly attended services, conventions, women’s meetings at Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and Solid Rock. Much of Soothill’s analyses the power and authority discourse along with the construction of gender. The principal actors in her analysis are the founder’s wives from Alive Chapel and Action Chapel and the female founder of Solid Rock as they

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<sup>71</sup> Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora*, 21.

<sup>73</sup> Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora*, 8.

<sup>74</sup> Crumbley, *Africa and the Diaspora*, 24.

<sup>75</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 24

interact with the women of their churches. By focusing primarily on the interactions of women Soothill's work is distinguished from that of Maier and Crumbley. Whereas Maier and Crumbley place themselves in a tradition Soothill's religious affiliation is somewhat ambiguous, when asked about her being 'born again' her reply was 'whilst I had been baptized "in the spirit" (I am an ex-evangelical Christian), the church I was baptized in (an evangelical Baptist Church) did not practice glossolalia (speaking in tongues)'. This reply was enough to gain 'broad acceptance' by the churches.<sup>76</sup>

Soothill's study explores the effect of the charismatic movement on Ghanaian gender issues and in so doing there is an attempt to represent the Ghanaian churches charismatic gender discourse.<sup>77</sup> Scholarship has become increasingly aware that the gender is cultural construct which is complex, subject to change and inseparable from other modes of difference. Further, her work investigates male-female relationships a theme that also emerged in my focus group discussions. Soothill challenges the view that gender discourse in charismatic churches are dominated by female domesticity and reassertions of patriarchy. Rather her work assesses the extent to which charismatic churches offer a counter-culture to prevailing views.<sup>78</sup> She illustrates how local appropriations of a global phenomenon can be used in the production of both cultural continuity and social change.<sup>79</sup>

Soothill is aware of the White, Western academic relationship to Africa as the 'Other' and as such attempts to 'give voice' to the 'unheard' in order to challenge imposed definitions of the 'Other'. However she argues, to do no more than 'give voice' without analysis is problematic. A compromise she offers is the inclusion of the active voice along

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<sup>76</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 5.

<sup>77</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 6-7

<sup>78</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 7.

<sup>79</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 26.

with dialectical analysis.<sup>80</sup> This stance allows for charismatic activities to be examined on their own terms, within local contexts whilst taking seriously the religious world views of believers. Her work is informed by anthropology and related disciplines concerned with the production of knowledge and the politics of representation.<sup>81</sup>

Having introduced three studies which relate to African churches I want to attend to three scholars whose work discusses African-Caribbean church. In Chapter 3 under ‘Missing: The Black British Pentecostal Woman’ I attend in greater detail to some of existing literature which deals with Black women of Caribbean descent and how this work contributes to that body of knowledge. What follows is a summary of the literature at the center of this research. Black theologians Robert Beckford, Joe Aldred, Anthony Reddie have, through their scholarship, acknowledged the important role women have played in the BBPC and that more work needs to be done in the academy to reflect Black British female voices.<sup>82</sup> This work takes their conclusions seriously by listening to the ordinary theology of women in the BBPC as they discuss Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience. Further this research take a practical theological approach and utilizes empirical method to explore Pentecostal women’s practice and values.

Elaine Foster, Valentina Alexander and Kate Coleman are Black British women of Caribbean descent who have written in the area of African-Caribbean women and church.<sup>83</sup> Both Alexander and Coleman’s work is theological in nature however both have taken a Black liberation approach. While Foster’s work explores the gender power relationships in

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<sup>80</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 31.

<sup>81</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 24.

<sup>82</sup> Robert Beckford, Anthony Reddie and Joe Aldred are Black theologians who research and discuss BMCs and who agree that women were integral in its development. See below 3.6. Missing! The Black British Pentecostal Woman.

<sup>83</sup> See below 3.6. Missing! The Black British Pentecostal Woman. For a fuller discussion of the works of Foster, Alexander and Coleman.

the NTCG her work exhibits the use of some interviews but does not take an empirical approach.<sup>84</sup> This present work takes an empirical approach based on practical theological empirical paradigm. Diane Austin Broos seminal work on Jamaican women provides an understanding and background of the cultural and religious milieu from which the participants come.<sup>85</sup> Nicole Toulis's work focuses on women in a NTCG in Birmingham. She presents an anthropological discussion of the post migratory ecclesial and religious experiences of the women in the UK.<sup>86</sup>

The second aspect of this work looks at Pentecostal spirituality and interfaces with three writers in the area of Pentecostal spirituality, Walter Hollenweger, Daniel Albrecht, Steven Land and Harvey Cox and Jeanne Porter.<sup>87</sup> While Hollenweger identifies the five features of Pentecostalism and the influence of Black-American spirituality on Western Pentecostalism, Land offers a theoretical exploration of Pentecostalism. Albrecht conducts an empirical study on five congregations in California within the context of corporate worship. My work hones in on the individual gender specific understanding of Pentecostal spirituality as it is lived, and in so doing moves the discussion surrounding Pentecostal spirituality beyond the analysis of crisis events and the study of Pentecostal worship to an understanding of Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience. I argue that Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience develops from life situations but can also inform life experiences which in turn contributes to and further facilitates growth in a woman's relationship with God. My

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<sup>84</sup> Foster, Elaine. 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid of the Black Churches in Britain'. In *Refusing Holy Orders: Women and Fundamentalism in Britain*, edited by Gita Sahgal and N. Yuval-Davis. London: Virago Press, 1992.

<sup>85</sup> Austin-Broos, Diane. *Jamaica Genesis: Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

<sup>86</sup> Toulis, Nicole. *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England*. Oxford: Berg, 1997.

<sup>87</sup> See 5.3 Pentecostal Spirituality.

understanding of Pentecostal spirituality is based on a definition constructed by Sandra Schneiders a Roman Catholic sister and professor of New Testament Studies and Christian Spirituality at the Graduate Theological Union who considers spirituality as *the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the horizon of ultimate value one perceives*.<sup>88</sup>

### **1.6.2. Black British Women of Caribbean Descent**

For the most part this study explores the experiences of British women of African-Caribbean descent. For the purposes of this research this description is applied to women whose ancestry is Jamaican but who now live in Great Britain. Forty-eight of the fifty-two participants who participated in this study were of Jamaican heritage, not by intention but because of the makeup of the Pentecostal churches addressed in the study. The terms Black and African-Caribbean are used interchangeably and refer to the aforementioned groups; reference to other people groups is made explicit. This study uses the term ‘Black British’ to denote the women in this study who are of Caribbean descent but have migrated or were born in Britain, however the term can and is used elsewhere more broadly to refer to non Caribbeans including Africans and people of African descent. Also it is used in England as an ascription for a person who is not White and is born in or who would say that their main affiliation is to Great Britain. Toulis treats the development of ethnic ascriptions in Britain as they pertain to Black people in her work on identity.<sup>89</sup>

In choosing African Caribbean Pentecostal Christians as a focus I highlight an area of the broader ‘Black Church’ to which little academic attention has been paid. This is a deliberate decision, however as already acknowledged there is significant research from both

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<sup>88</sup> See Chapter for a discussion of Schneiders’ work.

<sup>89</sup> See Nicole Toulis, *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 10-18.

African and non-African scholars regarding African churches and the concomitant gender discourse which can contribute to this study. (See Chapter 7 sections on prayer and Bible and conversion)

### **1.7. Overview of the Study**

Chapter two begins by identifying some of the epistemological principles which permeate this work, and includes discussion of the study of spirituality as a unique personal experience rather than in light of its theoretical underpinnings or framework (see chapter five for a further exposition). An account of the methodological challenges due to insufficient literature about BBPW's experience is followed by a discussion of women as principal characters in the study. The chapter culminates by discussing the development of practical theology and the suitability of empirical theology, as a practical-theological approach.

Chapter three introduces BBPW, it traces the historical development of the land of Jamaica, whose initial purpose was to produce sugar for the appetites of Europe, with African men and women forcibly removed from their homeland to feed that appetite. The aim is to highlight the distinctive history and experience of Black British women in Jamaica and England, an experience that includes the development of their spirituality with their acceptance of Christianity and Pentecostalism. The chapter culminates with their arrival in the United Kingdom, and explores some of the push-pull factors which were the impetus for migration. Chapters four and five explore and analyse Christian spirituality. They form a framework and provide a context from which an understanding of spirituality as lived experience is developed. Chapter four introduces three ways in which the concept of spirituality is understood and applied and follows with a discussion which presents the concept in the contemporary context, where it has such broad application that it affects almost every aspect of life, including academic research. This chapter focuses on the work of Sandra Schneiders

in the area of spirituality. While chapter four is more general treatment of spirituality from a Judeo-Christian perspective, chapter five is more specific, for it constructs a development of a Pentecostal spirituality from the history and perspectives of Black British women. Chapter six presents the voices of the women at the centre of this study as ordinary theology. In this chapter the methodology is operationalised and the empirical-theological cycle is presented a heuristic tool which guides the methodological process. Chapter seven is a reflection on and rescription of the participant's ordinary theology. Ordinary theology is placed in dialogue with theology, history and feminism. The thesis statement is presented in the concluding chapter along with a recommendations for further investigation



## Chapter 2

### Research Methodology

Pentecostalism as espoused by BMPC has been present in the United Kingdom since the 1950s and yet has received little academic attention, with even less attention given to its female members, who make up between 65 and 95 per cent of its adherents.<sup>90</sup> This study aims to elucidate the contours of BBPW's spirituality and thereby contribute to scholarship on African-Caribbean female religious experience and Pentecostal spirituality. The methodology presented below bears the weight of these considerations.

In researching the contribution of BBPW to Pentecostal spirituality by exploring their lived experience, I argue that lived experience can provide insight into the Black women's understanding of Pentecostal spirituality and its nature. How might that lived experience be explored? What are the challenges?

The discipline of practical theology, which is rooted in the Christian tradition, provides a fitting methodology, through empirical theology. Empirical theology adopts 'the tools and the methods of social sciences to map out the beliefs, attitudes and practices of individuals and communities'.<sup>91</sup> Empirical methods provide a means of exploring and reflecting theologically upon the lived experience of the participants – an aim of this study.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Pat Starkey, 'Women Religious and Religious Women: Faith and Practice in Women's Lives,' in *The Routledge History of Women in Europe since 1700*, ed. Deborah Simonon (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 178. Esther Madriz 'Focus Groups in Feminist Research' in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Sage: California, 2003), 364.

<sup>91</sup> Mark Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 15.

<sup>92</sup> Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 15.

This chapter first gives attention to some to the epistemological principles that inform this study, and then examines practical theology and empirical theology. The final two sections present a first survey of ordinary theology as data, followed by an examination of qualitative research. Qualitative research is a field in its own right, but one which ‘cross cuts disciplines, fields and subject matters’.<sup>93</sup> It is the social scientific paradigm of qualitative research is that is adopted for this research.

## **2.1. Epistemological Principles**

Before we turn to practical theology as the methodology for this work, I outline the epistemological principles that permeate and inform that methodology.<sup>94</sup> First, I locate myself in relation to the study; then I turn to a discussion of the principles that relate to the definition and study of Pentecostal spirituality and explore the challenge associated with limited research material regarding the present investigation.

### **2.1.1 The Researcher as Insider**

At the outset I will highlight the ‘the assumptions and preconceptions that influence [my] analysis and interpretation of data, the theoretical and analytical framework, even personal feelings, that [I] bring to the task of organising and analysing...’<sup>95</sup> As a Black British Pentecostal woman researching BBPW, I am positioned as an insider conducting critical insider research, as such the investigator studies herself, those like her, her family or her

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<sup>93</sup> Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research’ in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Sage: California, 2003), 3.

<sup>94</sup> Slee, *Women’s Faith Development*, 45.

<sup>95</sup> Jon R. Stone, *The Craft of Religious Studies* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 6.

community. This status along with my self-ascription influences how the data is interpreted.<sup>96</sup> The researcher conducting qualitative research often does not disclose his or her status, despite the fact that researcher status can affect what is seen and what is not seen and consequently impact the analysis of data. Wilson and Kitzinger conclude that there are both advantages and disadvantages to being on the inside. Even if the researcher has commonalities and similarities with the participants in her or his study, Wilson and Kitzinger maintain that on other grounds such as education or class, the researcher will always be an outsider.<sup>97</sup> Based on feminist research, they offer four ways to utilise the insider status: (1) *minimise*, which is simply to ignore any similarity and leave it out of the research; (2) *utilise* that status in a way that benefits the research, for instance in order to access hard-to-reach groups; (3) *maximise*, by including a study of one's own experience or, as a variation, the particular experience of a group of equal status; and finally (4) *incorporate*, in which the researcher is a participant in the study and has the same status as any other participant.<sup>98</sup> It is possible for the researcher to incorporate all the ways within a single study, the insider status *minimised*, then *utilised* to inform the work and then her or his experience can be *incorporated* in the research, often in unacknowledged ways.<sup>99</sup> Essentially, however, the mode of inquiry is grounded in the epistemological assumption that knowledge comes from human experience, which gives the insider additional credibility.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Jean Bartunek and Meryl Reis Louis, *Insider/Outsider Team Research* (California: Sage, 1996), 1. The notion of insider is in opposition to the positivist paradigm which calls for objectivity; such views see the insider notion as 'contaminating the production of knowledge'.

<sup>97</sup> Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger, 'Representing Our Own Experience,' *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2013), 251-255: 251.

<sup>98</sup> Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 'Representing Our Own Experience,' 252-253.

<sup>99</sup> Lai-Fong Chiu and Deborah Knight, 'How Useful Are Focus Groups for Obtaining the Views of Minority Groups?' in *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, ed. Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 100.

<sup>100</sup> Bartunek and Reis Louis, *Insider/Outsider Team Research*, 14.

### 2.1.2 The Study of Spirituality

As stated above, this work defines Christian spirituality as ‘the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the horizon’ which is believed to be God as revealed in his Son Jesus Christ, whose life is communicated to the believer through the Holy Spirit making her a child of God.<sup>101</sup> However, Pentecostal spirituality goes further in viewing the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption *and* the source and giver of spiritual gifts and power who manifests in the everyday life of the believer.<sup>102</sup> This inquiry does not aim to develop second-order theoretical language about spiritual life but rather seeks to investigate spiritual life as it is and or has been concretely lived.<sup>103</sup> This does not invalidate theoretical knowledge but recognises the interplay between the knowledge of individuals, which enriches theoretical knowledge of their spiritual life, and the theoretical knowledge about spirituality which illuminates interpretations of that life. The focus of spirituality as a field of study, however, is not knowledge of an individual or theoretical knowledge per se but the *experience of spiritual life as experience*. Study of the prayer of Teresa of Avila is illustrative of this point:

...the student of spirituality is not studying prayer as such but, for example, the prayer of Teresa of Avila as it is articulated in *The Interior Castle* and is manifest in her life which, itself, is mediated by her autobiography. The researcher presumably has considerable theoretical knowledge of prayer both through theological and psychological study and through personal and/or vicarious experience. But the focus of study is neither the theology of prayer nor the researcher's experience of prayer, but specifically the prayer of Teresa of Avila.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 16.

<sup>102</sup> Romans 8:15; 1Corinthians 12:4-11; Acts 1:8.

<sup>103</sup> Schneiders, ‘The Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 18.

<sup>104</sup> Schneiders, ‘The Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 18.

Consequently this examination of spirituality identifies unique experiences in the lived out faith of BBPW, unlike theology whose analyses and conclusions are intended to have a broad applicability. The very uniqueness of BBW experience can encourage, challenge, warn, illuminate, confirm, expand, subvert, or otherwise interact with both general theological theory, on one hand, and specific experiences of faith, on the other.<sup>105</sup>

Sandra Schneiders, a proponent of spirituality as experience, suggests three approaches to studying spirituality as experience: historical, theological and anthropological. These approaches are not rigid but are rather orientating frameworks from which specific methodologies are developed to study the particular phenomenon. The approach ultimately adopted will be dependent on what kind of knowledge (or skills) the researcher hopes to attain from the study which reflect the aspect of spirituality being investigated.<sup>106</sup>

Methodologies are defined as those procedures (methods) which are developed to investigate the area under study. While methods do not and should not dictate the area of investigation or how it is carried out, the methods adopted should be 'systematic attempts to ensure the validity and fruitfulness of the research'.<sup>107</sup>

### **2.1.3. An Opportunity to Expand Knowledge**

The challenge concerning literature was raised in the last chapter. A solely literature-based study would be challenging, given the limited resources. Brusco states that generally, social, political, economic and cultural expositions have excluded the experiences of women and have systematically ignored women as subjects, however this is changing for the better.<sup>108</sup> In

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<sup>105</sup> Schneiders, 'The Study of Christian Spirituality,' 18.

<sup>106</sup> Schneiders, 'Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,' 15.

<sup>107</sup> Schneiders, 'Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,' 16.

<sup>108</sup> Brusco 'Gender and Power', 77.

recent years however, a few academic projects have focused on the Christian experience of Latino and African-American women, and at points in this investigation these works serve as useful dialogue partners. However, not only are there few such works, but even fewer treat directly the experience of BBPW.<sup>109</sup> Literature written in the decades post *Windrush* tended to interpret Black women's experience and person either against prevailing Black stereotypes and or in comparison to 'the dominant conception of gender for women', which tended to be white and middle class.<sup>110</sup> This work is a contribution to the body of work which treats the religious experience of women in general and Black Pentecostal women in particular as central to the research.

#### **2.1.4. Women as Principal Characters**

Black British women are the principal characters in this study, thereby insight into an aspect of gendered Pentecostal praxis that of women's spirituality is being explored. Conducted among ordinary women, this research intentionally presents an analysis from below, from the grass roots, in recognition that an analysis of data acquired from formal leadership tends to privilege those voices, thereby camouflaging the voices and the importance of 'ordinary' women. Brusco observes that scholarly interest in the gendered nature of Pentecostalism has steadily increased across a range of disciplines.<sup>111</sup> A number of studies have repeatedly determined that Pentecostalism appeals to women and young people

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<sup>109</sup> C. Gilkes, *If It Wasn't for the Women: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2000); J. Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1973); Anthea Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Elizabeth Brusco, in the notes of the chapter 'Gender and Power', provides Pentecostal studies conducted in Latin and South America.

<sup>110</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 18.

<sup>111</sup> Brusco, 'Gender and Power,' 74.

in a greater number than to men and, further, has transformed the lives of millions of those women across the developing world for the better. Women in Pentecostal churches learn skills they can utilise elsewhere and they read and travel more, which has implications not only culturally, politically and economically but also theologically.<sup>112</sup> Although the greatest impact has been on improving women's social status, that feature has gone unnoticed by the academic community, including feminist academics.<sup>113</sup>

Brusco and Martin are intrigued by the larger number of women than men attracted to Pentecostalism, which is of particular scholarly interest as 'Pentecostal doctrine and practice are so evidently oppressive to women'.<sup>114</sup> So what are the reasons for the figures? We can note that the conversion of a woman typically influences the rest of her family. Typically women often convert first and consequently attract their husbands and sons who follow them, rather than the other way round. Another explanation lies in the 'marginality thesis', which notes that Pentecostalism affords women an opportunity for expression and status which is not available to them in mainstream society. Brusco contends, however, that the application of the 'marginality thesis' is inadequate.

[m]arginality explanations assume a centre, however, the 'decentring' that has gone on over the past decades as a result of feminist and postmodern challenges to established scholarly assumptions seriously erodes the explanatory power of such logic.<sup>115</sup>

Brusco argues that scholars of religion who offer such explanations devalue the cultural, social – and might I add religious/experiential – roles in which women function.<sup>116</sup> I agree with Brusco that there needs to be a rejection of the 'victimization hypothesis and [a putting]

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<sup>112</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 137.

<sup>113</sup> Bernice Martin, 'The Pentecostal Gender Paradox: A Cautionary Tale for the Sociology of Religion,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*, ed. Richard Fenn (Blackwell Publishing: Malden, 2003), 57.

<sup>114</sup> Brusco, 'Gender and Power,' 78.

<sup>115</sup> Brusco, 'Gender and Power,' 77.

<sup>116</sup> Brusco, 'Gender and Power,' 77.

to rest [of] the notion that Pentecostal women are victims of false consciousness'. If, states Brusco, explanations can get beyond the marginality thesis that would "allow women both value and agency ... conversion [can then be seen] as stemming in part from a linked set of processes that renegotiate gender and family relationship and personal identity, especially in climates of crisis".<sup>117</sup> Brusco determines that conversion stems from a renegotiation of roles and proposes that sociological and anthropological explanations can serve as alternatives to the marginality thesis. This present work is an empirical-theological contribution to the body of research that rejects the marginality and victimization theses that devalue BBPW's experiences.<sup>118</sup>

## **2.2 Practical Theology**

The following section first grounds this work in the discipline of theology in general and in practical theology in particular, in the form of an overview of the development of practical theology as a sub-discipline of theology. Practical theology has a number of different approaches, one of which is empirical theology, which is discussed next. Empirical theology adopts empirical research tools to elucidate theory; these tools can also be utilised to elicit ordinary theology. Ordinary theology, the next topic for review, is understood as the theological beliefs and processes of believers, who have had no theological training, that find expression in their 'God talk'. Such ordinary theology is developed as a consequence of their faith and their Christian practices, which include prayer, worship and liturgy. Empirical research techniques elicit their ordinary theology in the form of rich description; therefore empirical theology is a useful partner in the exploration of ordinary theology.

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<sup>117</sup> Brusco, 'Gender and Power,' 85.

<sup>118</sup> Brusco, 'Gender and Power,' 76.



To restate, this work explores BBPW's lived experience of the 'sacred' and how that experience informs their spirituality. These experiences are neither defined nor analysed from perspectives nor paradigms of social science or humanities because the objective of the research is not insight into the psychological processes, "social backgrounds and consequences or the cultural make up behind religious experience" but rather insight into religious experience as a theological construct.<sup>119</sup> As a sub-discipline of theology practical theology's offers a unique contribution as it is concerned with a wide range of overtly and implicitly religious activities or 'praxis'. Additionally, practical theological research begins and ends with the practice of the Christian faith as its practitioners experience it.<sup>120</sup> Therefore integral to practical theology is a concern for lived experience of Christian faith. More specifically then practical theology deems BBPW's lived experience and discourse as relevant, and thereby value is conferred on their narratives. It is the value that practical theology places on the experience of the participant that makes it suitable for this study. That experience is mediated as narrative, a narrative which includes theological concepts that women have assimilated and applied as they have judged relevant for their needs and purposes.<sup>121</sup>

An empirical-theological approach places value on the experiences of women in general and Black women in particular, not as objects/subjects of research but as whole persons with a heart as well as a brain.<sup>122</sup> A practical-theological empirical approach takes seriously the role of Pentecostalism as it is expressed in BBPW's everyday life through their

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<sup>119</sup> R.Ruard Ganzevoort 'Forks in the Road when Tracing the Sacred Practical Theology as Hermeneutics of Lived Religion,' (Presidential address, International Academy of Practical Theology, Chicago, 08.03.2009, 5.

<sup>120</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 2.

<sup>121</sup> Astley, 18. Edward Farley, *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on Church's Ministry* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 3; Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 29.

<sup>122</sup> Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 14.

faith and practice. While faith and practice are the direct objects of practical theology, faith and practice have been discounted by feminist writers who consider ‘the Bible and the Church [as] the biggest stumbling blocks in the way of women’s emancipation’.<sup>123</sup> However, McClintock Fulkerson acknowledges the need to include the experiences of *other* women, including those whose practice of faith does not line up with prevailing feminist assumptions.<sup>124</sup>

Despite being a sub-discipline of theology, practical theology, with its theological basis, can be considered as a theological discipline in its own right with a distinct subject area (that is the relation between Christian belief and practice) and methodology (the hermeneutical circle or pastoral cycle method).<sup>125</sup> It is also understood as a way of ‘delineating the orientation of all theology towards practice and rooting all theology in its existential responsibility’.<sup>126</sup> This work assumes that the experiences (including the practices) of BBPW are theological and value laden, and endeavours to gain insight into women’s ‘way-of-being-in-the-world’ by way of their ordinary theology, which is informed by their world view, beliefs and values.<sup>127</sup> Notwithstanding the contribution of social sciences to the

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<sup>123</sup> Brusco, ‘Gender and Power,’ 78; Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women’s Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock 1994), 2.

<sup>124</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 7.

<sup>125</sup> In this work practical theology is the discipline which mediates and integrates knowledge within theological education and between seminary, congregation and wider society. It is acknowledged that the term is often used interchangeably with pastoral theology – which is more integrative with psychoanalytic theory and psychology, particularly in the United States. In this work it is being used in the former context. Cf. Elaine Graham, *Words Made Flesh: Writings in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (London: SCM, 2009), xvii.

<sup>126</sup> Slee, *Women’s Faith Development*, 6.

<sup>127</sup> Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 17.

understanding of BBPW's experience, the central interest of this work is to explain and understand women's experience of Pentecostalism through a theological lens.<sup>128</sup>

### **2.2.1 Practical Theology within the Field of Theology**

Although practical theology can be understood as a unique discipline, the wider field of theology is both beneficial and relevant to this study. Theology “discerns, describes, interprets, explains, evaluates, and helps to construct the ways people speak about God – theologia – to God, and experience being spoken to by God”.<sup>129</sup> The field of theology includes the disciplines of biblical theology, systematic theology and practical theology, which together have formed the structure of Christian theology through the ages. Ruard Ganzevoort qualifies the use of each adjective, contending that each ascription denotes the focus of the area of theology while individually each strand relates directly to the other two,

There is no text without ideas or praxis behind it, in it and evoked by it; no idea without sources and repercussions in praxis; no praxis without sources and inherent ideas. That is what holds theology (or the study of religion) together, even when the materials and methods necessarily diverge. The study of religion works with religious sources, professed religious tradition, and lived religion.<sup>130</sup>

Practical theology's focus is the faith of believers as they experience it. The role of the practical theologian is that of interpreter; she is the “interpreter of the community's faith in action”.<sup>131</sup> She reflects on the community's practice, then defines and delineates the theory.

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<sup>128</sup> Ganzevoort, ‘Forks in the Road,’ 5. For Ganzevoort the sacred implies ‘centre around which one's life gravitates and a presence that evokes awe and passion’. The sacred is culturally determined and modelled by religious tradition.

<sup>129</sup> Ganzevoort, ‘Forks in the Road,’ 5.

<sup>130</sup> Ganzevoort, ‘Forks in the Road,’ 4.

<sup>131</sup> Mary Clark Moschella, ‘Ethnography,’ in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 225.

Some will argue that Christian theology in general ‘should be seen as practical through and through to its very heart’.

One will find no theologian who would not profess to reflect on practice, because theology has to do with God’s work in the world. It [theology] must reflect on the relation between God and people in the world if it is to be theology at all. ... What can be said about the relation between God and humans has already been said by all the other theological disciplines. What is left for practical theology is how to apply the insights of other disciplines to human praxis, be it the praxis of the pastor or the church, the dynamics between the church and the world or world religions.<sup>132</sup>

This understanding is based on the assumption that *all* Christian practices and experiences are infused with meaning and as such are theory laden. If this is the case, then practical theology as a theological discipline cannot have the monopoly on practice or reflection. These meanings shape the questions, concerns and criteria that are brought to engage with the more theoretical discussions of the Bible and Christian doctrine.<sup>133</sup>

This contention is a result of practical theology’s historical development. At the end of the eighteenth century, when practical theology was formally introduced to the academic curriculum, practical theology was an area of study primarily concerned with the general and cultural education of church ministers.<sup>134</sup> Its principal purpose was the transmission of leadership principles which were applicable to the clergy in fulfilling their duties and as such

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<sup>132</sup>Chris Hermans ‘When Practical Theology Goes Practical: From Applied to Empirical Theology,’ in *Hermeneutics and Empirical Research in Practical Theology*, ed. Chris Hermans and Mary Moore (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 22.

<sup>133</sup> See Don S. Browning, *Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), and Richard Osmer, ‘Toward A New Story of Practical Theology’, *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16, no. 1 (2012), 66-78. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 May 2013, 67; Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 3.

<sup>134</sup> Gijsbert Dingemans, ‘Practical Theology in the Academy: A Contemporary Overview,’ *Journal of Religion* 76, no. 1 (Jan. 1996), 82-96: 82;

practical theology was only taught in seminaries or church faculties.<sup>135</sup> Consequently during the nineteenth and twentieth century practical theology in the United States and Europe was concerned with ecclesial leadership and had little academic application; ministers learned how to preach, lead worship and conduct pastoral conversations.<sup>136</sup> In the United States pastoral care, stewardship and preaching were informed by sociology, psychology, general education and communication theories.<sup>137</sup> Consequently the discipline was not promoted as a unified whole but rather in relation to the academic disciplines that informed the particular ecclesial or pastoral skill. Due to a shift ‘to the inner direction’ of practical theology in Europe the social sciences began to have a wider impact on the subject area.<sup>138</sup> Traditionally, scripture or doctrine was used by practical theologians as the starting point for any problem and the resulting reflection would then be applied to church practice. However the shift inclined theologians to begin with practice rather than with scripture or doctrine.<sup>139</sup>

Early in the nineteenth century Friedrich Schleiermacher’s book *Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums* (Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study) divided theology into three fields, each field metaphorically described as part of a tree. Philosophical theology was considered the roots, while historical theology was the stem or body. Practical theology informed the practice of leadership in the church and was the crown of theology.<sup>140</sup> Browning

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<sup>135</sup> Dingemans, ‘Practical Theology in the Academy’, 82; for an overview of the development of practical theology see Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999), 104 - 123.

<sup>136</sup> Dingemans, ‘Practical Theology in the Academy’, 82; Mark Cartledge, ‘Practical Theology’, in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre Droogers, and Cornelis Van der Laan (London: University of California, 2010), 268; Ray Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (IVP: Illinois, 2001), 12.

<sup>137</sup> Dingemans, ‘Practical Theology in the Academy,’ 82.

<sup>138</sup> Dingemans, ‘Practical Theology in the Academy,’ 83.

<sup>139</sup> Dingemans *Practical Theology in the Academy: A Contemporary Overview*, 83.

<sup>140</sup> Dingemans *Practical Theology in the Academy*, 82; Don Browning *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 43; Mark Cartledge ‘Practical Theology,’ in

comments that practical theology was, for Schleiermacher, the teleological goal of theology; essentially Schleiermacher's view of theology in general was a *theory to practice* structure – a formational or ministerial model.<sup>141</sup> Heitink takes the view that Schleiermacher has been misunderstood and did not intend for practical theology to be reduced to a clerical paradigm as suggested by Dingeman and others. The reference to practical theology as the crown of theology was based on the premise that practical theology “presupposes everything else, it is also the final part of the study because it prepares for direct action”. Heitink argues that Schleiermacher broadened the domain of action beyond the “office of the ministry” to include every action in the church and [every action] for the church for which rules can be given. In this interpretation Heitink takes the view that practical theology was akin to applied science, whereby the central role of church leaders was in inspiring the ecclesia.<sup>142</sup>

However, the association of practical theology with ordained ministry both in the church and in academia has influenced its ascendancy and definition. Defining practical theology has been and is problematic and arriving at a consensual definition is no easy task. This lack of definition has caused some in the field to assert that the discipline is “invalid or ill conceived”.<sup>143</sup> However, McLemore determines that rather than signifying practical theology's lack of direction, the difficulties in defining the discipline “rather... [underscore practical theology's] complex and extended responsibilities”.<sup>144</sup> Practical theology is, to use McLemore's term, “multivalent” and as such “appears in a broad array of places and

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*Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre Droogers, and Cornelis Van der Laan (Berkeley; London: University of California, 2010), 268, Ray Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis*, (IVP: Illinois, 2001), 24.

<sup>141</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 27.

<sup>142</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 27.

<sup>143</sup> Miller-McLemore, 'Introduction: The Contributions of Practical Theology,' 5.

<sup>144</sup> Miller-McLemore, 'Introduction: The Contributions of Practical Theology,' 5.

spaces”.<sup>145</sup> She identifies four distinct enterprises of practical theology, each with different objectives and audiences. First, practical theology is an “activity of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday”; second, it is a “method or way of understanding or analysing theology in practice used by religious leaders and by teachers and students across the theological curriculum”; third it refers to “a curricular area in theological education focused on ministerial practice and subspecialties”; and finally it is “an academic discipline pursued by a smaller subset of scholars to support and sustain [the] first three enterprises”.<sup>146</sup> These “enterprises” are not mutually exclusive but are connected and interdependent; they reflect the range and complexity of practical theology currently and in so doing help in the term’s application. This current study primarily utilises the understanding of practical theology as an activity of believers and a method or way of understanding whilst bearing in mind that neither application is exclusive, but all are connected and interdependent.

Cartledge determines that despite practical theology’s history, definition and redefinition, a consensus of meaning and application is emerging. In agreement with, McLemore, Cartledge identifies three strands of practical theology; however in contrast to McLemore he does not attend to the ways in which the term, practical theology, is applied but rather to practical theology’s application and method. Cartledge offers the first strand as the initial ministerial formational model, a model which he does not invalidate but rather asserts as one which begins with and includes tradition and provides a valid approach for the education of practicing and future pastors.<sup>147</sup> Conceived in this way, practical theology contributes to the ‘how to’ of ministry poesis, its practices derived from established

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<sup>145</sup> Miller-McLemore, ‘Introduction: The Contributions of Practical Theology,’ 5.

<sup>146</sup> Miller-McLemore, ‘Introduction: The Contributions of Practical Theology,’ 5.

<sup>147</sup> Cartledge, ‘*Practical Theology*’, 268.

theological disciplines and the church. This approach does not begin with practice but is formulated prior to practice and applied to subsequent practice. As such it is a theology for practice. However poiesis becomes phronesis when practised within a faith context.<sup>148</sup>

The second strand Cartledge identifies is influenced by liberation theology and is dominant in academia's focus on 'contemporary praxis'. Grounded in Marxist theory, it is applied to diagnose problems which can be solved using liberating practices. Liberation theology as a hermeneutical tool is utilised to challenge power relations, particularly relations between the established church and marginalised groups.<sup>149</sup> Theologians who embrace liberation theologies view this strand of practical theology as critical and engaging, functioning not only in the church but in society also. Empirical theology as the final strand is predicated upon the social sciences and utilises social scientific research tools – qualitative and quantitative empirical research within theological discourse. Developed in the 1980s, this strand emerged as "theologians started to consider the idea of theory development", as it generates from the actual beliefs and practices of religious individuals and groups rather than from theologians' reflections on theological traditions from a historical perspective. Cartledge identifies these strands as representative of the areas of inquiry amongst membership of the International Academy of Practical Theology (IAPT). He recognises that these strands are not exclusive and can be combined according to the interests and commitments of the scholar. However, regardless of the strand to which the theologian commits, there is agreement that the 'common focus or direct object of the inquiry namely contemporary religious praxis; that is, the value-laden practices of ecclesial and religious communities in global contexts'.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Cartledge, 'Practical Theology', 268.

<sup>149</sup> Cartledge, 'Practical Theology', 268.

<sup>150</sup> Cartledge, 'Practical Theology,' 269.



These strands are current, fresh conceptions of practical theology, conceptions which have been greatly influenced by intellectual developments that have taken place in the social sciences. These developments, which include liberation theology, an acknowledgment of the significance of first order theology and the ‘methodological reorientation and fresh reading of human behaviour’ have all served to develop thinking in the discipline.<sup>151</sup> Integral to the fresh conception is the notion that practical theology begins with practice, moves to theory and then moves back to practice. This process is discussed in the following section.

### **2.2.2. The Centrality of Practice in Practical Theology**

Practical theology is a strand of theology which at its core is about practice. It is

...concerned with practical matters, including ‘practices’ in the technical sense of co-operative human activities governed by implicit rules. In Christianity such practices encompass a wide range of overtly and implicitly religious activities: pastoral care, counselling and spiritual direction; the forming and maintenance of community; the teaching and learning of religion (and therefore preaching, education, evangelism, and other forms of communication); social and political action; prayer, worship and liturgy; responses to moral issues at individual, interpersonal, communal and global level; and so on.<sup>152</sup>

The *pastoral cycle* (*Figure 1*) has been developed to explicate this relationship. A cycle begins and ends in the same place, in this case with practice, moving to theory and back to practice again. Specifically practical theology begins and ends with the practice of Christian faith as experienced by its practitioners.

Hence practical theology and practical theologians

...[begin] with experience, rather than deductive, deriving propositions from abstract theories of human nature (either philosophical or psychological) or

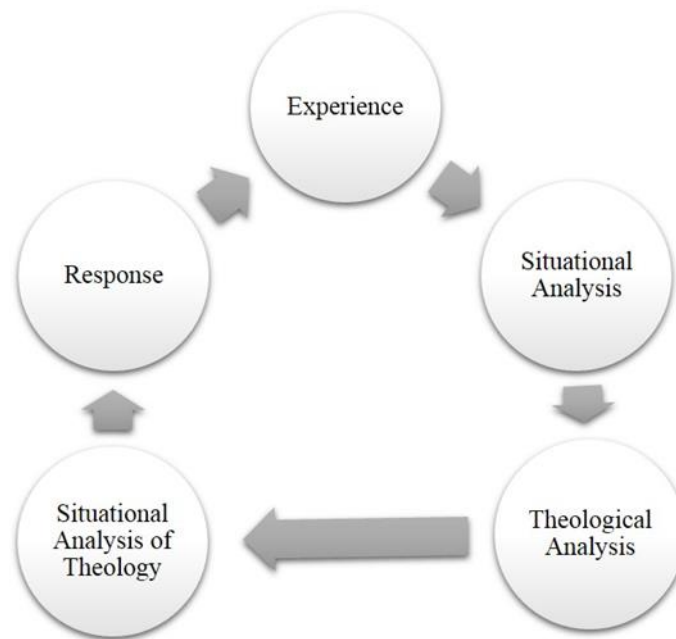
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<sup>151</sup> Miller-McLemore, ‘Introduction: The Contributions of Practical Theology,’ 1-2.

<sup>152</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 2.

from doctrines of God, evil and salvation...begin with the concreteness of human experience: what is happening here?...<sup>153</sup>

There is a commitment to story or narrative as the primary data of practical theology, ‘the first hand stories of those in a particular situation whose experience constitutes the lived reality of faith’.<sup>154</sup>



*Figure 1: The Pastoral Cycle*

However experience is understood not as a given but as experience which has been informed by social, political and religious values and commitments. Hence a hermeneutic of suspicion has to be brought to bear upon experience in order ‘to render visible the politics of bias in any given social situation’.<sup>155</sup> However caution should be exercised to avoid the temptation of applying ‘misleading categories’ or to ‘tidy up’ data to fit into ‘global ontologies’. The temptation is strong as these ontologies determine what is real, primary and consequential

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<sup>153</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, ‘Suffering’ in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 24.

<sup>154</sup> Slee, *Women’s Faith Development*, 6.

<sup>155</sup> Slee, *Women’s Faith Development*, 7.

and what is to be discounted as epiphenomenal and of no consequence.<sup>156</sup> Therefore Pentecostal discourse should not be interpreted hastily using standard sociological concepts as misinterpretation can occur. People must be allowed to speak in their own terms. David Martin provides the metaphor ‘rescription’ as an approach. The ordinary theology of the participants is the ‘script’; scholarly engagement with the ‘script’ is a form of rescripting, an interaction which maintains the proper scholarly values of both respect and attentiveness.<sup>157</sup> A critical analysis of experience is then ‘brought to interact with the wisdom, insights and practice of Christian tradition’.<sup>158</sup> The interaction and dialogue between experience and Christian tradition gives rise to a new praxis, which itself is critically informed and submitted to fresh analysis.<sup>159</sup>

The work of the practical theologian involves a complicated set of movements. The first movement is some sort of inductive or situational shift from practice to theory which must then be followed by a move back to practice. This is a basic pastoral cycle model (*see Figure 1: The Pastoral Cycle*).<sup>160</sup> A more elaborate model was designed to be applied to congregational contexts to assist congregations with theological reflection that would bridge a perceived gap between Christian tradition and experience and thereby move praxis forward positively and constructively. One of the benefits of this cyclical/spiral model is the distancing that occurs, keeping in focus the outcome, which should have meaning in lived reality.

Osmer points out the need for practical theologians to articulate clearly the kind of practice they are working with and to justify their choices on theological, philosophical or

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<sup>156</sup> David Martin. ‘Undermining the Old Paradigms,’ *PentecoStudies*, 5, no. 1, (2006):18-38; 18.

<sup>157</sup> Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 17.

<sup>158</sup> Slee, *Women’s Faith Development*, 7.

<sup>159</sup> Slee, *Women’s Faith Development*, 7.

<sup>160</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 2; Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 20-21.

pragmatic grounds. In identifying the kind of practice the pluralistic nature of the discipline is acknowledged and the research is situated in a context. The pluralistic nature of the discipline means that no practical theologian represents all practical theologians; however, each practical theologian can be clear about decisions informing her or his particular perspective and locate that perspective in relation to others.<sup>161</sup> Jeff Astley identifies these practices as a wide range of overtly and implicitly religious activities, while Heitink makes the point that praxis does not mean practice, but rather ‘action, activity’.<sup>162</sup> From his definition of practical theology as the “empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society” Heitink extrapolates two concepts. He comments that much of the confusion regarding praxis is due to the failure to make “logical and methodological distinction” between two types of praxis.<sup>163</sup> He distinguishes between ‘the Mediation of the Christian Faith’ (Praxis 1) and ‘the Praxis of Modern society’ (Praxis 2).<sup>164</sup> The core Christian conviction of ‘God’s coming to humanity in the world’ is mediated through human ministry and is the ‘theological centre of gravity of practical theology’.<sup>165</sup> Praxis 2 is the domain of action, where individuals and groups, motivated by their personal ideals and driven by varying interests, make specific choices and pursue specific goals. This happens in people’s daily experience – in their mutual relationships, in marriage and in the family. It also happens in the workplace and in political, economic and social contexts. Heitink further points out that the preposition *in* designates the relationship of Praxis 1 to Praxis 2: they are closely related but there are tensions that sometimes exist between the two.

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<sup>161</sup> Richard Osmer, ‘Toward A New Story of Practical Theology,’ 67.

<sup>162</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 2; Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 2.

<sup>163</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 8.

<sup>164</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 8.

<sup>165</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 7.

### 2.2.3 Empirical Theology

As stated above empirical theology is an approach to practical theology which integrates the methods of social science to elucidate theory from the actual beliefs and practices of religious groups and individuals. Dutch theologian and pioneer of empirical theology Johannes A. van der Ven established the Department of Empirical Theology in the 1970s at the Catholic University of Nijmegen and in 1988 launched the *Journal of Empirical Theology* to advance this method internationally. Van der Ven distinguishes empirical theology from a social scientific study of religion in light of the former's aims and outlooks. Empirical theology, he argues, is theological whilst utilising empirical methodology "to explore, describe and test theological ideas contained within a specific context". Due to its inductive approach empirical theology is applicable to the study of contemporary religion, which can be pluriform and heterogeneous.<sup>166</sup>

In *Practical Theology* Cartledge focuses on 'the theology and value-laden practices of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians'.<sup>167</sup> Both in his own research and in academic publications Cartledge advocates the empirical theological approach particularly as it pertains to Pentecostal and Charismatic studies. *Practical Theology* contains a useful overview of practical theological research conducted by Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal scholars as they explore Pentecostal practice. This approach to practical theology is in its infancy, and therefore the studies which employ empirical theology are few, and of that number even fewer state explicitly that they take this approach.<sup>168</sup> As stated above the traditional approach to an inquiry began with reference to scripture or doctrine, the results of which were applied

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<sup>166</sup> Grace Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion: A Practical-Theological Study* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 15.

<sup>167</sup> Cartledge, 'Practical Theology,' 269.

<sup>168</sup> Cartledge, 'Practical Theology,' 269.

to church practice. With the introduction of empirical theology, practical theology's framework within which to study the religious convictions, beliefs, images and feeling of people of faith is brought to bear. Integral to this approach is its descriptive and explanatory value which can potentially contribute to concepts and theories within theology.<sup>169</sup>

A key challenge for empirical theology is the explication of *God*, which is the foremost theological task in the study of Christianity. How can God, the object of Christian theology, be studied when the object, in empirical terms, is clearly not self-evident?<sup>170</sup> How can ideas about God be explored, described and tested? Van der Ven argues that in Christian theology the object of inquiry is not God but rather the human experience of God. Christian theology incorporates both "knowledge of God [and] also knowing God".<sup>171</sup> This lived experience can be accessed using methods developed in social science and hermeneutics which should be the focus of empirical theology. In relation to theology in general and practical theology in particular

[Van der Ven] argues that theology gathers into itself the appropriate techniques and methods to facilitate this development [that is to explore, describe and test theological ideas within a context].... In this sense theology's relationship to the social sciences is described as 'intra-disciplinary'.<sup>172</sup>

Empirical theology can be utilised as either inter-disciplinary or intra-disciplinary. When inter-disciplinary, it calls for an appreciation of the respective disciplines of theologians and non-theologians. Francis offers two reasons in support of an inter-disciplinary approach; first it develops the tools of social science and adds rigor and critique to the work of the theologian, and second, empirical theologians are able to learn from and contribute to the

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<sup>169</sup> Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossolalia: An Empirical-Theological Study*, 12

<sup>170</sup> Johannes van der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen: KOK Pharos, 1993), 102.

<sup>171</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 110.

<sup>172</sup> Mark Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossolalia: An Empirical-Theological Study* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2002), 7.

debates and methodologies presented by social scientists.<sup>173</sup> An inter-disciplinary approach requires, however, that the researcher affirm the theoretical and philosophical paradigms and satisfy the methodological criteria which undergird social sciences. This would render a theological study indistinguishable from religious studies.<sup>174</sup> Van der Van (a proponent of an intra-disciplinary approach which utilises the tools of empirical science to answer theological questions) permits the theologian to use empirical methods whilst still practising true theology. This approach has, however, two possible disadvantages. First, the theologian needs to develop empirical skills, which though not an insurmountable challenge would take time and possibly a commitment to the paradigms within which the skills are rooted. Second, methodological laziness might occur if the critique of social scientists is lacking.<sup>175</sup> An advantage, however, lies in empirical theology's contribution to theology - practical theology, in particular - in that it provides a method of systematically and methodologically accessing experience as displayed in the church, in society and in pastoral work.

#### **2.2.4. A Critique of Empirical Theology**

In addition to the critique of the intra-disciplinary approaches there are further concerns with this approach. The first relates to the adoption of social scientific theoretical and philosophical paradigms as referenced above. Can an approach that is predicated on a positivist paradigm provide insight into faith and the expression of that faith? Paul Tillich argues that a positivist paradigm would not consider the object of theology (which is our ultimate concern along with its concrete expression) an object for study since it is not subject

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<sup>173</sup> L. Francis, 'Personality Theory and Empirical Theology,' *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 15, 1 (2002) 37-53, 40; Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 16.

<sup>174</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 16.

<sup>175</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 17.

to detached observation but is *experienced* through surrender and participation. Further the object cannot be tested using scientific methods of verification; it too is only verified through participation which takes a lifetime.<sup>176</sup> Van der Ven agrees with Tillich that believers' apprehension of God is through faith. However, it is not the apprehension of God that is the object of empirical theology, but rather faith. Therefore faith is both the object and goal of empirical study and not God.<sup>177</sup>

Cartledge and others maintain that the conceptual framework which is defined in terms of communicative praxis is both "reductionist and problematic", and further "the political-liberation theological commitment ... enhance[s] the problematic nature of the conceptual framework".<sup>178</sup> He therefore proposes an alternative approach to empirical theology, one that starts from a different theological presupposition.<sup>179</sup> In his empirical theological work on glossolalia, Cartledge turns to the work of Anthony Theilston, who provides the contours of an approach that is not totally reliant upon materialist theory but takes seriously both 'Scripture as authoritative and the Spirit which enables interpretation with innovation and consistency'.<sup>180</sup>

Ganzevoort describes theology as the discipline that discerns, describes, interprets, explains, evaluates and helps to construct the ways people speak about God – *theo-logia* – to God, and experience being spoken to by God.<sup>181</sup> A vital question which has relevance to this study is to what extent the beliefs, words and actions of an individual (subject) can be studied, understood or explained by another individual (researcher). What tools are used to realise these endeavours? Practical theologians and all scholars of the human condition have

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<sup>176</sup> Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossolalia*, 11.

<sup>177</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 110; Cartledge *Charismatic Glossolalia*, 11.

<sup>178</sup> Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossolalia*, 17.

<sup>179</sup> Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossolalia*, 17.

<sup>180</sup> Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossolalia*, 17, 22.

<sup>181</sup> Ganzevoort, 'Forks in the Road,' 5.



to consider not only how to study these aspects of the human being, but if such study is possible. The how involves the method, that is the tools used to access meaning and motives, while the question of possibility ‘requires [the researcher] to defend the theory of human cognition, behaviour and organization upon which the methods are based’. The philosopher Herman Husserl defined everything we observe through our consciousness, whether through seeing, imagining, thinking or evaluating, as ‘a phenomenon’.<sup>182</sup>

Phenomenology seeks to explicate the of essence meaning.<sup>183</sup> Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutical phenomenology identifies a gap – distanciation – between the subject and the researcher, between what is said and what is received. Each expression used imbibes meaning, and the *distanciation* is a precondition for understanding.<sup>184</sup> The phenomenological approach advocates the setting aside of pre-judgments, a ‘bracketing’ ‘restraint’ or ‘suspension of judgment’ about the phenomenon under investigation so as to be ‘completely open, receptive and naïve to listening to hearing and to hearing the research participant’ ‘and thus the essence can be perceived.’<sup>185</sup> How realistic is such an aim? Admirably the phenomenological approach attempts to understand the subject of study on its own terms and not on the terms of the researcher, but is a value free, non-prejudicial, unbiased description - hermeneutical naivety- attainable? Astley states that our understanding of the other will always be *our* understanding.<sup>186</sup>

These are important concerns for empirical theology and interpretations of ordinary theology since this approach aims to present ‘religions as they are lived by their adherents,

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<sup>182</sup>Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 182.

<sup>183</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 182.

<sup>184</sup> Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, 186.

<sup>185</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 111.

<sup>186</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 112.

rather than [as] abstract systems of beliefs' in the form of data.<sup>187</sup> That said there needs to be an acknowledgement that what we call our data is in reality our construction of other people's constructions.<sup>188</sup> Yet Astley identifies this approach as the most valuable method for understanding religion and a necessary condition for empathy in the study of religion.

### 2.3. Method

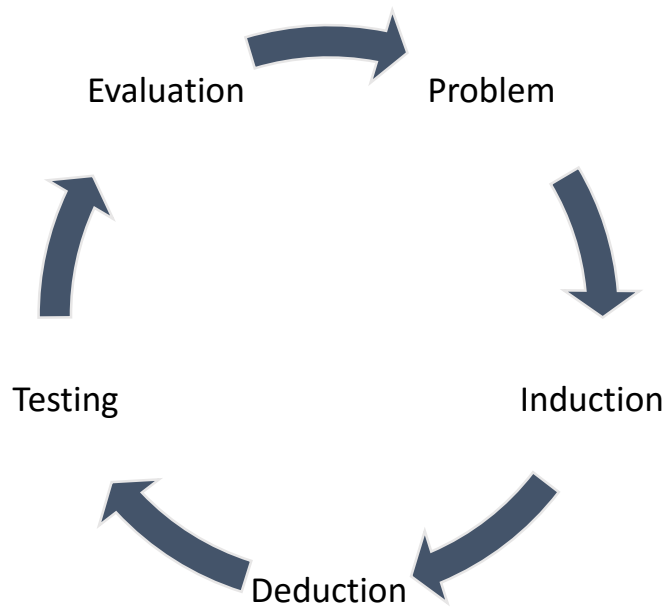
The principles discussed above are applied to the design of this study as it is grounded in practical theology, specifically empirical theology; focus group discussions are utilised for data collection and data is in the form of BBPW's ordinary theology.

Van der Ven's empirical-theology cycle (*Figure 2*) research was utilised as a heuristic tool because when applied to theological enquiry cycles can serve to guide the process, not to dictate it. The inquiry is rooted in the lived experience of BBPW, and its aim is to listen to BBPW's voices for insight into *their* understanding of Pentecostal spirituality and its nature. Qualitative research methodology provides the data collection method and mode of analysis to explore the ordinary theology of BBPW. The study is theological because, first, it is grounded in practical theology, which is as much about theology as it is about practice, and, second, because of theological reflection. That theological reflection is not left to the conclusion of the work but is woven into the study.

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<sup>187</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 112.

<sup>188</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 113.



*Figure 2: Empirical-Theology Cycle*

The empirical theological cycle guides the researcher in choosing an area of study and developing research questions, drawing theories inductively from the empirical data gathered, then exploring those concepts deductively using secondary data, theories and literature, which can then be tested qualitatively or quantitatively before being evaluated theologically.<sup>189</sup>

In this work first through observation and then through a preliminary literature survey the research problem was identified. Second, inductive qualitative research was conducted in order to gather data from BBPW, utilising focus groups as a method of data gathering. This was followed by data analysis, which included transcription and immersion in the data. From data immersion themes began to emerge. Finally these themes were analysed in the light of literature and links were developed which led to the development of a thesis which describes and explains the empirical reality of Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience. At this point a dialectic as suggested by Cartledge is utilised, a process which, states Cartledge undergirds

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<sup>189</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 19.

the empirical cycle and which is framed in the oscillation between *lifeworld* (concrete reality) and *system* (theory or theological metanarrative).<sup>190</sup> As a researcher I move between these two poles within Pentecostal-Charismatic studies and Pentecostal/charismatic spirituality, which informs the overall process.<sup>191</sup>

The method employed is predicated upon the goals and ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study.<sup>192</sup> These assumptions to a large extent guide the methodologies, which in turn influence both the structure and the process of the research design and consequently the instruments or methods used to collect data.<sup>193</sup> Although there are other types of research methodologies, the commonly used approaches are qualitative and quantitative.<sup>194</sup> The epistemological and ontological prescription of the study predisposes it to a qualitative methodology, which I discuss below.

Cartledge proposes that theological discourse takes place at three levels. Level one is ordinary discourse, which in this study emerges from the data gleaned from focus groups; data in this case is the ordinary theology of the women. Level two is ecclesial discourse: here practical-theological dialectic is initiated as data is placed in dialogue with denominational materials, statements of faith and policy documents. The final, third level is the academic

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<sup>190</sup> Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 24 – 30.

<sup>191</sup> Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 14; Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 22

<sup>192</sup> The method includes the concrete steps to do research, collect data and draw conclusions from the data. Hans-Günter Heimbrock, 'From Data to Theory: Elements of Methodology in Empirical Phenomenological Research in Practical Theology,' *International Journal of Practical Theology* 9 no.2 (2005): 275. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 17 June 2013.

<sup>193</sup> Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 2005.

<sup>194</sup> Structuralism, postmodernism and methodological anarchism are research models which do not fall within in the parameters of quantitative and qualitative research. Postmodernism emphasizes 'playfulness and differences over rules and sameness' especially in the nature and hermeneutic of language. Methodological anarchism argue that there is no truth in statements about the nature of reality and as such there can be no valid methodological rules for how it should be researched.

level, in which ordinary narratives interact with relevant theoretical perspectives, in this case Pentecostal charismatic discourse, history, feminist theory and theology.<sup>195</sup>

### **2.3.1. Ordinary Theology**

As stated above, theology as a discipline discerns, describes, interprets, explains, evaluates, and helps to construct the ways people speak about God – theo-logia – to God, and experience being spoken to by God. It is generally accepted that theology is a discipline that is taught in universities and seminaries but not in ‘real life’. Can theology and theologising – that is discernment, description, interpretation, explanation, and evaluation – occur outside the academy or seminary? ‘Ordinary theology’ is Jeff Astley’s term for ‘the theological beliefs and processes of believing that find expression in the God talk of those believers who have received no scholarly theological education’.<sup>196</sup> As previously stated it is the first level of theological discourse; it is theology that is ‘normal’.<sup>197</sup> It is, asserts Astley, the theology we learn first, a kind of primal knowing that coexists alongside the more technical and systemised knowing that we acquire through more formal education.<sup>198</sup> It is this knowing, which develops as a result of the lived experience that this study aims to capture. It is an important kind of theology that is learnt outside of formal structures. There is therefore a distinction between education which brings about deliberate learning, which tends to be narrower, intentional and engineered, and education/learning which is not promoted by formal teaching contexts but occurs regardless. This unintentional learning elicits an enduring

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<sup>195</sup> Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 20.

<sup>196</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 1

<sup>197</sup> Peter Ward and Heidi Campbell, ‘Ordinary Theology as Narratives: An Empirical Study of Young People’s Charismatic Worship in Scotland,’ *International Journal of Practical Theology* no.15 (2011): 226.

<sup>198</sup> Ward and Campbell, ‘Ordinary Theology as Narratives,’ 226.

change in behaviour or thinking.<sup>199</sup> It is my assumption that the spirituality of the women in this study has deep roots. By its fruit they are known, but the roots of faith give insight into how spirituality has reached this point.<sup>200</sup> These roots of faith are hidden from others, but they can also be hidden from the individual and as such, it can take work to trace these systems.<sup>201</sup> Ordinary theology is not just about exploring ‘beliefs and believing’ in general; its application is primarily to the theology of churchgoers who are not academically trained.

Ordinary theology develops out of practice, i.e. with cooperative human activities governed by implicit rules.<sup>202</sup> Astley observes that in Christianity these practices “encompass a wide range of overtly and implicitly religious activities: [for] example pastoral care, spiritual direction, the formation and maintenance of community”.<sup>203</sup> Traditionally such practices have been understood as the application of theology, i.e. ‘where ‘pure theology’, is put to work deductively and applied to the life of the church and the world.<sup>204</sup> Ward and Campbell assert that not only has the ‘ordinary’ become a central theme in practical theological enquiry – particularly to the hermeneutical understandings of practical theology – but there is also a growing interest by qualitative researchers. Ordinary theology does not have its own method, but draws on a range of disciplines and fields

...to furnish [the research] with the requisite theoretical insights and procedures, and empirical methods and data, along with the appropriate sensitivity concerning relevant practical – particularly pastoral and educational – considerations. Two areas of original research are of particular importance: one is empirical and social-scientific, the other is philosophical and theological, (that is conceptual).<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 4.

<sup>200</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 14.

<sup>201</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 14.

<sup>202</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 1.

<sup>203</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 2.

<sup>204</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 2.

<sup>205</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 97.

Astley suggests that the application of empirical research techniques such as participant observation and unstructured or semi-structured interviews can provide rich data which provides a ‘full description and depth of understanding for the study of ordinary theology’.<sup>206</sup>

### **2.3.2. A Critique of Ordinary Theology**

Despite the capacity of ordinary theology to provide insight into the beliefs of ordinary churchgoers, ordinary theology has been ‘othered’ over and against the ‘powerful or formal or privileged or colonial construction of faith’.<sup>207</sup> Instead ordinary theology is perceived as neither systematic nor orderly, as consisting of a combination of lived experience, church doctrine, preaching and teaching, personal history and relationships, and cultural context. Further some theologians resist the use of social scientific methods for researching religion on the grounds that such methods are based on ‘secular’ social theories which are perceived to be theologies or anti-theologies in disguise.<sup>208</sup> Additionally, the time-consuming nature of collecting ordinary theology means that only small samples can be employed. By contrast, questionnaire surveys lend themselves to larger samples and provide data which is open to quantitative statistical analysis. However, ordinary theology forms the substance upon which theological reflection occurs and as such aids in an understanding of the development of Christian faith and practice.

Though there is much to criticise, not least the lack of self-critique of its ideological perspectives, it would be prudent not to dismiss the methodological developments and substantive insights by social scientists in the study of religion.<sup>209</sup> In respect to the ordinary theology as data, although the study of ordinary theology can benefit from both a quantitative

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<sup>206</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 98.

<sup>207</sup> Ward and Campbell, ‘Ordinary Theology as Narratives,’ 226.

<sup>208</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 98.

<sup>209</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 98.

research approach and a qualitative research approach, the difference between the two approaches lies in how the nature of reality is perceived. This influences not only the research method but also the purpose of the research. A quantitative approach, which seeks explanations and predictions that will generalise to other persons and places and can achieve its goal by careful sampling strategies and experimental design. The role of the researcher in this approach is to ‘observe and measure’. The goal of qualitative research is to understand and interpret how participants in a social setting construct the world around them. As the main research instrument in the qualitative approach, the researcher observes, questions and interacts with the participants to produce data, which she must then interpret.<sup>210</sup> Qualitative data tends to be unwieldy and less objective, while quantitative data cannot stand alone but requires qualitative work to take place first, to devise valid research instruments.<sup>211</sup> A quantitative approach also requires a specific question. There is no room for the question/problem to evolve, which, states Astley, can lead to blind spots in data collection and analyses. Despite the unwieldy nature of qualitative data, there are a number of advantages to adopting this approach for this study. These advantages form the basis of the following discourse.

In the context of this study, ordinary theology offers a means of exploring the beliefs of Black Pentecostal women. As a mode of theologising, ordinary theology conveys value both on the women as ‘ordinary theologians’ and on their own ‘theology’.

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<sup>210</sup> C. Glesne and A Peshkin, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* (White Plains, N.Y: Longman. 1992), 6.

<sup>211</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 99.



## 2.4. Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach it is not exclusive to theology, religious studies or social sciences, but is a 'field of inquiry in its own right' which cuts across disciplines, fields and subject area.<sup>212</sup>

Qualitative enquiry developed in the early years of anthropology out of a need to understand 'the other', which was deemed 'exotic' and 'primitive' and was usually 'non-white' and as such was the object of the ethnographer's investigation.<sup>213</sup> It is out of this historical context that qualitative research developed, and at each stage of its historical development it has been variously understood.<sup>214</sup> An initial generic definition states that

[Q]ualitative research is an interdisciplinary, and sometimes counter disciplinary field. It cross cuts the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multi-paradigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multi-method approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by multiple ethical and political positions.<sup>215</sup>

The methodology of qualitative research is also diverse and pluralistic and in some cases ridden with internal contradictions.<sup>216</sup> Much of its diversity is due to the fact that it is drawn from a number of schools of thought which have become integrated within this research model. This has led to the belief that there is not one qualitative methodology, but a number of qualitative methodologies, which cover everything that is not quantitative.<sup>217</sup> Inherently, qualitative research is a multi-method field, the primary objective being the attainment of an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Qualitative research does not aim to capture objective reality as its ontology negates that possibility. That which is 'known' is

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<sup>212</sup> Denzin and Lincoln 'The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,' 3.

<sup>213</sup> Denzin and Lincoln 'The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,' 2.

<sup>214</sup> Denzin and Lincoln 'The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,' 4.

<sup>215</sup> Denzin and Lincoln 'The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,' 11.

<sup>216</sup> Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 36.

<sup>217</sup> Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 37.

known only through subjective representation. It is the quality of the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study which adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to a study.<sup>218</sup>

Qualitative, by implication, emphasises ‘the qualities of entities, processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured [at least not] in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency’.<sup>219</sup> Rather qualitative researchers investigate the socially constructed nature of reality, and it is the intimate relationship between the researcher, the subject and any situational constraints that ultimately shapes the study.<sup>220</sup>

Denzin and Lincoln identify five significant ways in which qualitative research differs from quantitative research, which generally equate to the difference in approach to the same issue: the application of positivism; the acceptance of postmodern sensibilities; capturing the individual’s point of view; examination of the constraints of everyday life; and securing rich descriptions. First, the application of positivism: while both perspectives are shaped by these traditions, quantitative researchers hold to ‘a critical realist’ view of reality, of a reality that is ‘out there to be studied, captured, and understood’. A qualitative perspective, however, takes a post-positivist stance which argues that reality can be never fully apprehended, only approximated or represented. Whilst post-positivism uses multi-methods to capture reality, it still emphasises both the discovery and the verification of theories, as would positivism. This means that qualitative data analysis can employ statistical and computer-assisted analysis, both of which ‘permit frequency counts, tabulations and low level statistical analyses’.<sup>221</sup> Although many qualitative researchers in the post-positivist tradition will use statistical

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<sup>218</sup> Denzin and Lincoln ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 8.

<sup>219</sup> Denzin and Lincoln ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 13.

<sup>220</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 13.

<sup>221</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 13.

measures, methods and documents, few will report their findings in terms of the complex statistical measures or methods to which quantitative researchers are drawn.<sup>222</sup> Second, the acceptance of postmodern sensibilities: although this view is not shared by all qualitative researchers, it relates to a new generation of qualitative researchers who adopt poststructural and/or postmodern perspectives and as such view positivist science as just one method among many. Their objective is ‘telling a story’ about society and the world, and therefore they do not venerate one field over another but use the tool most appropriate to the task. Advocates of critical theory and researchers who are allied to constructivist, post-structural and post-modern schools of thought reject positivist and post-positivist criteria in the evaluation of their research. They contend that such criteria ‘reproduce a certain kind of science, a science that silences too many voices’. Consequently they adopt different methods for evaluating their inquiries, including the ethic of caring, political praxis, multi-voiced texts and dialogues with subjects.<sup>223</sup> Third, Denzin and Lincoln state that while the objective of both qualitative and quantitative researchers is to elucidate the subjects’ points of view, qualitative investigators believe they can get close to the actors perspectives through detailed interviewing/facilitation and observation. However, quantitative researchers regard such methods as unreliable, impressionistic and subjective. Conversely qualitative researchers regard quantitative methods as remote, inferential, and empirical and as such believe they cannot capture their subjects’ perspectives. Fourth, qualitative researchers embrace the everyday social world and embed their findings in it, while quantitative researchers abstract their subjects from the world and seldom study it directly. Finally, qualitative researchers find value in securing rich descriptions from the respondents, whereas quantitative researchers

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<sup>222</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 15.

<sup>223</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 16.

with their etic, nomothetic commitments are less concerned with rich descriptions because such detail hinders the development of generalisations.

Denzin and Lincoln conclude that the real difference between the two fields boils down to the politics of research and to which funding agency or academic department has the power to legislate the ‘correct’ mode of inquiry and, consequently, solutions to problems.<sup>224</sup>

#### **2.4.1. Qualitative Research as Process**

It was stated at the beginning of this section that qualitative research cuts across disciplines, fields and subject areas. One example of this is found in its commonalities with ethnography, as both seek to understand practices, in this case religious practices, *in situ* or in context.<sup>225</sup>

Part of the ethnographic task within practical theology is to gather new knowledge and provide insight into the spiritual practices of a local congregation. This knowledge provides understanding of how the group became what it is today.<sup>226</sup> Ethnography therefore recognises a congregation’s history as an integral aspect of its development and therefore necessary in order to interpret faith.<sup>227</sup> Denzin and Lincoln identify three “interconnected, generic activities as qualitative research process, their labels include theory, method and analysis; or ontology, epistemology and methodology”.<sup>228</sup> The researcher is part of the process; she brings to the research a personal biography and her interpretation is a product of her particular class, gender, racial, cultural, cultural and ethnic community perspective.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 14.

<sup>225</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 16; Mary Clark Moschella, ‘Ethnography’ in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 224.

<sup>226</sup> Moschella, ‘Ethnography,’ 226.

<sup>227</sup> Moschella, ‘Ethnography,’ 227.

<sup>228</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 29,

<sup>229</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 29,

Therefore she comes with a set of ideas or a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that is examined in a specific way (methodology, analysis).

#### **2.4.2. Focus Groups as a Data-Gathering Method**

The term focus group is used to designate both a type of group, generally comprised of people who are unfamiliar with each other but whose selection is based on a set of common characteristics.<sup>230</sup> In a group context the researcher elicits different perspectives and points of view “without pressuring participants to vote, plan or reach a consensus” rather the group negotiates meaning. It is this process of negotiation that the researcher observes and records.<sup>231</sup> This leads to the second way in which the term is used, focus group is also used to identify a qualitative data-gathering technique used both by market researchers and by social scientists.<sup>232</sup> The term - coined by Merton, Fiske and Kendall - was “[applied] to a situation in which the researcher/interviewer asks very specific questions about a topic after having already completed considerable research”.<sup>233</sup> In general all group interviews are generically termed focus groups, even though they differed in nature.<sup>234</sup> For example, the nature of the focus group may be exploratory, bringing participants together to test a methodological technique, or it may be used in conjunction with other data gathering techniques, a scientific method of verification known as triangulation. As a data-gathering method, focus groups are supported by feminist researchers and scholars who have become disenchanted with the disengagement and aloofness of positivistic methods and methodology.

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<sup>230</sup> Richard A. Krueger, *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (California: Sage Publications, 1988), 18.

<sup>231</sup> Krueger, *Focus Groups*, 18.

<sup>232</sup> Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey ‘The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text,’ in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Sage: California, 2003), 71; Krueger, *Focus Groups*, 29.

<sup>233</sup> Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 71.

<sup>234</sup> Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 17.

Flick states that with the focus of qualitative research being individual experience, once the problem is identified the first step in sampling is to identify a population whose experience relates to the problem and illuminates the investigation. Therefore the participants in this study were chosen because their experience included that of being female, Black and Pentecostal, a homogenous group in terms of gender, ethnicity and spirituality. However 'Black women', as with other minority groups, may be homogenous in some characteristics which may be a factor in data gathering, while in others such as education, income level or occupation they may be heterogeneous. Such factors should be borne in mind in a research project.<sup>235</sup> Chiu and Knight have noted that '[b]eliefs and behaviours are often assumed from ethnicity' and as a result the 'diversity and fluidity' that exist within ethnic groups can be missed or overlooked.<sup>236</sup> Nevertheless, rich data can be elicited from groups of women specifically because they form a homogenous group, and are not individuals acting alone, additionally their interactions generate primary data. The interactions, argues Wilson, forms a 'social context' which provides an opportunity to 'examine how people engage in such meaning-generation, how opinions are formed, expressed and sometimes modified within the context of discussion'.<sup>237</sup> In general then, while homogeneity is certainly beneficial, diversity among the group allows for the comparison and contrasting of viewpoints.<sup>238</sup>

It should be noted that women and Black people are considered marginalised minority groups. From a research perspective, marginalised ethnic minority groups are generally

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<sup>235</sup> Krueger and Casey, *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, 181.

<sup>236</sup> Chiu and Knight, 'How Useful are Focus Groups,' 99.

<sup>237</sup> Sue Wilkinson, 'How Useful are Focus Groups in Feminist Research,' in *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, ed. Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 67.

<sup>238</sup> Krueger and Casey, *Focus Groups*, 72.

considered among the hard-to-reach groups for social science research. However, partly in light of the recruiting methods adopted by Madriz and others, focus groups have been found to be a method which elicits rich responses.<sup>239</sup> For some minority groups, focus-group sessions permit participants to discuss issues that are not usually raised. There is, states Barbour, “security in numbers”.<sup>240</sup>

Focus groups have a number of advantages over other qualitative methods such as one-to-one interviews or participant observation. It is these advantages which make this method particularly suitable for the present study. I will outline a number of general advantages before discussing more specific ones which pertain to this study. First, focus group can be assembled relatively quickly and inexpensively as compared to the time, planning and expense required to conduct more large-scale, systematic survey.<sup>241</sup> Second, the focus group provides a means of observing group interaction whilst collecting a large amount of rich data about a group in a relatively short amount of time, again as compared with individual interviews and participant observation.<sup>242</sup> Third, the method can be applied to a wide range of topics and to a variety of individuals in a variety of settings.<sup>243</sup> Finally, as most of the data is verbal, researchers and decision makers can readily understand and analyse the responses of most respondents, which is not always the case with sophisticated surveys, particularly those that require complex statistical analysis.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Rosaline Barbour, *Doing Focus Groups* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2008), 21

<sup>240</sup> Barbour, *Doing Focus Groups*, 21; Madriz, ‘Focus Groups in Feminist Research,’ 364.

<sup>241</sup> David W. Stewart, Prem N. Shamdasani and David Rook, *Focus Groups Theory and Practice* Applied Social Science and Research Methods series Vol 20. (Chicago: Sage Publications, 2007), 15.

<sup>242</sup> Madriz, ‘Focus Groups in Feminist Research,’ 365; Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 73.

<sup>243</sup> Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook *Focus Groups Theory and Practice*, 15..

<sup>244</sup> Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook *Focus Groups Theory and Practice*, 15.15.

Along with the general advantages outlined above, there are more specific advantages that make this method particularly useful for this study. First, it was key that the method adopted had the capacity to place BBPW as subjects at the centre of the project. Focus groups place the subject at the centre of the study, and while the researcher/facilitator is integral to the discussion, there is a balance of power between the researcher and the researched.<sup>245</sup> Second, the semi-structured nature of the question guide provides flexibility for participants to determine the direction of the discussion whilst allowing the researcher to probe the respondent's responses.<sup>246</sup> Third, focus groups provide a vehicle to access to the opinions, viewpoints, attitudes and experiences of respondents.<sup>247</sup> Accessing the experiences and opinions that form the ordinary theology of the women is the starting point for this work, and hence a method that facilitates this process is advantageous. Fourth, people who participate in the groups share some similar characteristic such as, ethnicity, socio-economic background and, in this case, gender. Same-gendered groups provide moral support, which helps to reduce the anxiety often associated with the unfamiliar, an outcome that is more difficult to achieve in one-to-one interviews or with the impersonal questionnaire. Fifth, respondents are able to react to or build upon the responses of other group members. Madriz affirms that "[t]his synergistic effect of the group setting may result in the production of data or ideas that might not have been uncovered in individual interviews".<sup>248</sup> Social interaction, "engaging in dialogue, sharing ideas, opinions and experiences and even debating with each other", brings about "socially constructed interactional experiences" and contributes to the development of

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<sup>245</sup> Madriz, 'Focus Groups in Feminist Research,' 364.

<sup>246</sup> Madriz, 'Focus Groups in Feminist Research,' 364; Stewart and Shamdasani, 15.

<sup>247</sup> Madriz, 'Focus Groups in Feminist Research,' 371.

<sup>248</sup> Madriz, 'Focus Groups in Feminist Research,' 364.



“shared stocks of knowledge”, a process called ‘interpretive interactionism’.<sup>249</sup> This type of knowledge development is integral to the process of writing history and culture together.<sup>250</sup> This is important particularly for minority women, whose voices are rarely heard.<sup>251</sup> Finally, focus groups may empower participants by validating their voices and experiences.<sup>252</sup>

In conclusion, this data gathering method is particularly suited to this research because of its capacity to explore the life experiences of marginalised minorities and in particular women.<sup>253</sup> As stated above, it specifically draws upon conversations with other women to gain insight into women’s life experiences. In group contexts, women often share the same language and can utilise their own words and frameworks to describe their experiences. This has been particularly empowering “[f]or African American, Latina and Asian American women, for example, [for whom] sharing with other women has been an important way to confront and endure their marginality”.<sup>254</sup>

### **2.4.3. Critique of Focus Groups**

Along with the advantages of focus groups come a number of weaknesses. First, serious study and evaluation of this method of data collection is scarce and unsystematic.<sup>255</sup> Second, unlike participant observation, which take place in the participants’ milieu, focus groups are conducted in researcher-constructed contexts, and consequently the range of behavioural data that might be gathered is narrower and often limited to verbal exchanges, with behaviour

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<sup>249</sup> Madriz, ‘Focus Groups in Feminist Research,’ 372-373; Stewart and Shamdasani *Focus Groups Theory and Practice*, 15.

<sup>250</sup> Madriz, ‘Focus Groups in Feminist Research,’ 373.

<sup>251</sup> There are a number of factors to bear in mind when using the focus interview technique which Frey and Fontana elaborate on in the chapter on interviews. Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 77-79.

<sup>252</sup> Madriz, ‘Focus Groups in Feminist Research,’ 365.

<sup>253</sup> Madriz, ‘Focus Groups in Feminist Research,’ 368.

<sup>254</sup> Madriz, ‘Focus Groups in Feminist Research,’ 372.

<sup>255</sup> Madriz, ‘Focus Groups in Feminist Research,’ 365.

potentially less authentic because of the contrived context. Third, but connected to the first two weaknesses, the presence of a researcher within the unnatural context could also impact the group dynamic, unlike in participant observation, where the researcher is somewhat invisible. In this method, the researcher is perceived as the authority, and if not well-facilitated, the conversation can be directed through the researcher. Fourth, often data from the research cannot be generalised unless used in conjunction with another method, in triangulation; in empirical theology data is placed in dialogue with theory, thereby permitting generalisations to be made.<sup>256</sup> Fifth, group pressure may influence the group adversely, with the opinions of a strong individual dominating and influencing the opinions of the whole group. Additionally the data acquired may be the result of group think and not individual opinion.<sup>257</sup> Finally self-report data is critiqued on the grounds of the relationship between the participant and the experience that the participant reports. How much of the data is an accurate reflection of what really happened or what the participant really thinks, particularly in a group context?<sup>258</sup> These concerns arise because people do not always tell ‘truths’, recollections can be embroidered and because memories fail. Some participants want to please and create a good impression, while others contradict themselves and or deliberately lie. From this created context researchers in general and feminist researchers in particular have to reconstruct the ‘experience’ that lies beneath or beyond the talk.<sup>259</sup> This is a very real weakness in this tool, which relies so much upon the self-report data of the women. Despite

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<sup>256</sup> Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 73; Todd Jick, ‘Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Process,’ *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24, (December 1979): 602-611.

<sup>257</sup> Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 73.

<sup>258</sup> Celia Kitzinger, ‘Feminist Approaches,’ in *Qualitative Research Practice*, ed. Clive Seale (London: Sage, 2004), 126.

<sup>259</sup> Kitzinger, ‘Feminist Approaches,’ 126.

its disadvantages, scholars and in particular feminist researchers view focus groups as a viable and valid method of data gathering.<sup>260</sup>

#### **2.4.4. The Role of the Researcher**

The researcher in the field is not just one self but many selves.<sup>261</sup> Levi-Strauss, Weinstein and Weinstein use the metaphor of the researcher as *bricoleur* or a quilt maker. The quilter stitches, edits and put together slices of reality, forming a unified understanding.<sup>262</sup> The emphases on the verbs ‘understand’ and ‘explain’ differ, however. Some researchers wish to understand the meaning of people’s beliefs and actions, a process that involves nuanced and accurate description of what the belief or action means to the individual followed by a creative interpretation by the researcher in order to find meaning in beliefs, symbols and behaviours that may emerge from a world dramatically different from the researcher’s own.<sup>263</sup>

While this is the objective of qualitative study, quantitative schools observe human behaviour not to understand behaviour or action but to enable causal analysis, that is, to construct explanations for what *caused* the action to happen. Researchers look for trends in comparative data of human behaviour, developing generalisations and attempting to determine the causes of behaviour X or belief Y. Since such theorising is based on inductive logic, i.e. general conclusions are made based on repeated observations of a particular behaviour or action, and such theories are rarely questioned.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 74.

<sup>261</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 5; Fontana and Frey, 84.

<sup>262</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,’ 7.

<sup>263</sup> Russell McCutheon, *The Insider/Outside Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader* (London: Cassell, 1999), 5.

<sup>264</sup> McCutheon, *The Insider/Outside Problem*, 5.

The qualitative researcher can be reflexive, however, in conducting an “ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment”.<sup>265</sup> Hertz surmises that by so doing the researcher has a greater understanding of the “differences of ideologies, cultures, and politics between interviewers and interviewees”.<sup>266</sup> This work ventures into reflexive ethnography in general and native ethnography in particular, where I utilise my own experience in the culture of Pentecostalism and as a Black British woman.<sup>267</sup> This engagement is in line with the view that researchers and interviewers generally play an active role in their interactions with participants, and therefore interviews are negotiated accomplishments, a form of discourse between speakers rather than a monologue. In response to the critique that the data from focus groups cannot be presented as objective, value-free data if it is lifted out of the context in which it is gathered, feminist researchers have legitimised the autobiographical voice which is associated with reflexive ethnography.<sup>268</sup> As referred to in 2.1.1 feminist writers advocate initiating research with personal experience, whereby researchers inject themselves into the research from the beginning, explaining their connection with the project, or use personal knowledge to help them in the research process.<sup>269</sup> The issue of taking data out of context did not solely inspire this shift in thinking; the contribution of epistemological doubt due to the ‘crisis of representation’ was an added

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<sup>265</sup> Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 84.

<sup>266</sup> Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 84.

<sup>267</sup> Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner, ‘Autoethnography, Personal Narrative and Reflexivity,’ in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Sage: California, 2003), 11.

<sup>268</sup> Fontana and Frey, ‘The Interview,’ 91; Ellis and Bochner, ‘Autoethnography, Personal Narrative and Reflexivity,’ 212.

<sup>269</sup> Ellis and Bochner, ‘Autoethnography, Personal Narrative and Reflexivity,’ 212; (see S. H. Jones, *Kaleidoscope notes: Writing women’s Music and Organisational Culture*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira; R. R. Linden, *Making Stories, Making Selves: Feminist Reflections on the Holocaust*, Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1992 – for a summary of reflexive studies see S. Reinharz, *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 258-263).

factor. This latter concern notes that the information shared by subjects is *their representation* of *their experience* and is then interpreted by an autobiographical researcher who presents a further representation.

Hermeneutical representations by researchers from the global north are being critically examined by women, lower-class, ethnic, racial groups, and scholars from the global south, who are now researching and writing their representations.<sup>270</sup> Through native ethnography, researchers from the global south who share a history of colonialism or economic subordination, including subjugation by ethnographers who have made them the subjects of their work, are representing their own experiences. As bicultural insider/outsiders, native ethnographers construct their own cultural stories and question the interpretation of those who write about them. These writers use their dual positionality to problematise the distinction between the observer and the observed, the insider and the outsider.<sup>271</sup>

#### **2.4.5. Ethical Considerations**

Without the consensual participation of BBPW this study could not occur. In September 2010 I submitted my research project entitled *Women of the Spirit* to the University of Birmingham's Arts and Social Sciences ethical review committee it was assigned the reference number ERN\_10-0808. Such committees have been formed to protect the participants, and the researcher, from harm and/or legal retribution and to ensure that the research "is conducted according to professional and ethical standards".<sup>272</sup> The application documentation covered the number and involvement of participants in the project. How would the participants be identified? How would they be recruited? How would consent be

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<sup>270</sup> Ellis and Bochner, 'Autoethnography, Personal Narrative and Reflexivity,' 213.

<sup>271</sup> Ellis and Bochner, 'Autoethnography, Personal Narrative and Reflexivity,' 213.

<sup>272</sup> Punch, 'Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research,' 168; Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 16.

gained? The material also noted arrangements made for participant withdrawal, compensation and risks. Generally, ethical review documents cover the following areas: professional standards and ethical conduct; researcher-respondent relationship; researcher-researcher relationship; and the treatment of animals. The only category that did not affect my research directly was the treatment of animals; I was affected by all the other categories to a greater or lesser extent. The scope of this work does not allow for any depth of discussion of the categories, but I will expand on the researcher-respondent category because the participants were central to this project.

This work was dependent upon the participation of Black women, and not merely on their presence but also on their sharing details from their personal lives. Most of the ethical issues involved in doing research with human participants pertain to “harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of data”.<sup>273</sup> Anyone who consents to participating in a research project will be impacted to some extent, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that that impact is minimal and positive. Participants should not be negatively impacted physically, mentally or legally by participating in a research project.<sup>274</sup> While this intent might seem obvious, history attests otherwise. The Nuremburg trials, for example, revealed experiments carried out on concentration camp inmates. Participants in Stanley Milgram’s psychology experiments thought they were causing harm to other individuals.<sup>275</sup> The prevention of physical harm requires the exclusion of that which will cause physical harm to any participant, including those who may be susceptible to such harm, such as people who have mental disorders, and the avoidance of research that may cause participants to harm themselves. Mental harm alludes to research which may directly or indirectly cause low self-

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<sup>273</sup> Punch, ‘Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research,’ 168.

<sup>274</sup> M. De Laine, *Fieldwork Participation and Practice: Ethics and Dilemmas in Qualitative Research*, (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 142; Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 18.

<sup>275</sup> Punch, ‘Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research,’ 167.

esteem, stress, anxiety or depression, perhaps because the researcher has formulated the questions in a demeaning manner or exhibited a lack of respect for the participants. Legal harm occurs when a participant's rights to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are violated.<sup>276</sup>

The application of ethical conduct in everyday practice is not uniform. Although the need for regulation and a code of conduct is acknowledged, adherence to the standards varies.<sup>277</sup> While some researchers fully adhere - excepting where methodology makes adherence impossible, such as in participant observation, where the respondents are not supposed to know that they are being studied. Other researchers argue that full adherence in all circumstances is neither possible, practical nor desirable. For instance full disclosure may not be desirable in cases where the participant is involved in deviant behaviour such as family violence or cheating on exams. In such instances researchers in support of relative adherence hold that bypassing ethical considerations is justified if the outcome provides "valuable information that will help society, and those involved in the study, to improve the quality of their life".<sup>278</sup> Another perspective understands ethics as serving the needs of research and not the other way around. "Ethics for the purpose of ethics or as a ritual or professionalism has little value. Research is not conducted for the sake of ethics but for improving the overall quality of life".<sup>279</sup>

Submitting the ethical review, which was cleared, was part of my commitment to causing no harm and to professional responsibility both to the university and to the participants. Other measures included being properly identified and contactable, to acquiring informed consent and protecting participants' identities.

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<sup>276</sup> Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 19.

<sup>277</sup> Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 22.

<sup>278</sup> Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 22.

<sup>279</sup> Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 22.

Even though I was personally acquainted with the gatekeepers and some of the participants, discussions and meeting were conducted in a professional manner. In other words proper identification was used, I was a researcher carrying out work as part of a University of Birmingham research project and they had recourse to my supervisor should they not be happy with any part of my behaviour. They were given an information sheet with my contact details and the contact details of my supervisor that they were free to take with them.

The background to and reason for the focus group discussion was read by the participants and then read aloud by the researcher (Appendix 2a). Opportunity was given to the participants after reading the information sheet to ask questions and or to withdraw from the group. They were also free to contact me following the discussion if they felt that they wanted to withdraw their contribution to the study. Consent came after the participants had read the information sheets and therefore can be considered informed consent. ‘Informed consent’ means that participants know about the research they are about to take part in and have the chance to refuse to take part.<sup>280</sup> As stated, informed consent for this project was in the form of an information sheet and a consent sheet which the participants were asked to sign and initial (Appendices 2a and 2b). This process of consent is supported by Flick who advises researchers in approaching the field and participants, to prepare a form that regulates the informed consent – wherever possible. The form should explain the purpose of the research, the expectations of the participant (e.g. to participate in a discussion), the procedure with the data (how long it is to be stored, who will have access, how is anonymity guaranteed). This should be signed by both the researcher and the participant and should include a possibility of withdrawing consent. To give the researcher a working basis, a time

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<sup>280</sup> Uwe Flick, *Designing Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2008), 27.



for withdrawing a signature should be defined (e.g. two weeks). If this can be realized, this contract should also include whether the participant will be given the results or not.<sup>281</sup>

As far as possible the identity of the participants was protected by assigning pseudonyms to the participants and to the individual churches. In the case of NTCG, although the denomination is mentioned, exact locations were not used, only regions, as most towns and cities, except London and Birmingham, have only one NTCG church.

While I anticipated that the risk of harm to the participants was minimal, I had not reckoned on the relationships between participants and on the potential for harm to such relationships. Saldaña states there will sometimes be ‘slippery or unsolvable’ dilemmas that present themselves in work with human participants, due to unforeseen issues and the idiosyncratic nature of being human.<sup>282</sup> In this particular case one group included a pastor and some members of her congregation, and although the focus group produced rich data, I cannot be sure that the pastor and/or her congregants felt free to speak. To my knowledge no sensibilities or friendships were affected, but such considerations should be present when discussions include close friends or family members or congregants as in this case.

## **2.5. Is This Feminist Research?**

The aim of feminist research is the study of the social conditions of women in a sexist, ‘malestream’ and patriarchal society. Its objective is to enlighten its audience regarding issues surrounding taken-for-granted sexist practices and gender blindness of government and community practices including academia which have ignored the female voice.<sup>283</sup> Such research is contextual, inclusive, experiential, and complete though not

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<sup>281</sup> Flick, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 27.

<sup>282</sup> Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2013), 24.

<sup>283</sup> Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 66; Kitzinger, ‘Feminist Approaches,’ 125.

necessarily replicable, and inclusive of emotions and events as experienced by women. Emphasis is placed on women's experiences. Women's experiences, often ignored in the past, in feminist perspective are considered significant indicators of reality. In its wider context the present study contributes to the development of women's history, taking account of women's roles and reconstructing that account in terms of female rather than male concerns. Madriz states that one of the principles of feminist research is "research by, about and for women".<sup>284</sup>

Acknowledging the validity of women's experience through their own representation was central to the 1970s second wave of feminism. Consequently this process became the intellectual foundation for the discipline of *Women's Studies* and to feminist challenges to 'conventional Western epistemology'.<sup>285</sup> Kitzinger presents a brief overview of the emergence of feminist social science which draws upon the everyday experiences of women. These experiences served as a basis from which research questions emerged. Additionally the experiences and the subsequent questions became core topics of empirical enquiry. In so doing the previously silent were given a voice which was to become a dominant metaphor in feminist research.<sup>286</sup>

There was an expectation in academia that women articulate and justify their stories in male-dominated contexts, using the language and thought forms of male-dominated traditions such as philosophy, psychology and religion.<sup>287</sup> The dilemma stems from the value that academia places on "elucidating high theory over the interrogation of lived

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<sup>284</sup> Madriz, 'Focus Groups in Feminist Research,' 375.

<sup>285</sup> Kitzinger, 'Feminist Approaches,' 125.

<sup>286</sup> Kitzinger, 'Feminist Approaches,' 126.

<sup>287</sup> Elaine Graham, 'Feminist Theory,' in Bonnie Miller-McLemore (ed) *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 197-198.

experience”.<sup>288</sup> This dilemma is being met by “honouring in theoretical discussions the idiosyncrasies of ordinary lived experience” and holding in creative tension the “immediacy of praxis and narrative” with systematic analysis.<sup>289</sup> At a grassroots level, Graham understands that one of the tasks of feminist pastoral care is to “[enable] women to learn the necessary vocabulary of self-esteem by which they can articulate the complexities and realities of their lives free from external expectation”.<sup>290</sup> The category of ‘women’s experience’ has revolutionised and brought value to feminist theory and politics.<sup>291</sup>

Kitzinger points out, however, that the concept of women’s experience is contested. Which women’s experiences are being referred to? Under what circumstances? How are these experiences expressed? As feminist theory developed in significance and influence, it was ‘universalising diverse and pluralistic lives’.<sup>292</sup> Even in the analysis of data feminist researcher’s analysis of the data, Kitzinger observes that research data that “cannot be easily assimilated into feminist critique” is often excluded from the final report by feminist researchers. This process occurs in a number of ways for example, participant’s words might be reinterpreted or excluded altogether, or the “voices of powerful groups (such as men, heterosexuals)” were assessed as lacking a full grasp on the situation under investigation.

Kitzinger notes:

by implicitly endorsing some voices as offering accurate, truthful or valid ways of understanding experience, while ‘explaining away’ other voices as merely rationalisations or justifications born of ‘false consciousness’ or ‘patriarchal discourses’, [feminist researchers] are imposing a heavy (and often unacknowledged) interpretative frame on ...data.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Elaine Graham, ‘Feminist Theory,’ 198.

<sup>289</sup> Elaine Graham, ‘Feminist Theory,’ 198.

<sup>290</sup> Elaine Graham, ‘Feminist Theory,’ 197.

<sup>291</sup> Elaine Graham, ‘Feminist Theory,’ 199.

<sup>292</sup> Elaine Graham, ‘Feminist Theory,’ 199.

<sup>293</sup> Kitzinger, ‘Feminist Approaches,’ 127.

Such practices not only raise ethical and political concerns but also call into question the validity of the scholarship arising from the research.<sup>294</sup>

The nature of the discipline of practical theology has been largely determined by its history, where it has been the domain of white males and intended for the religious education of white male clergy. Practical theology's failure to analyse and acknowledge constructs of gender, race and class mitigates against the reflection/action mode of practical theology as it is employed to influence these groups. Ackerman and Bons-Storm argue that failure raises a number of issues with regards to efficacy, the roles of power and difference and their relation to the politics of the academy, the interpretations of situations and the making of meaning.<sup>295</sup> Elaine Graham observes that by the late 1960s and the 1970s fields such as feminist ethics, biblical studies, systematic and philosophical theologies reflected the emergence of feminist academic studies. However, not until the early 1990s did practical theology produce a similarly significant body of material. Why did practical theology lag behind among feminist practical theologians? Breaking the silence and finding ways to articulate women's experience are keys to overcoming women's exclusion.

So, is this study a piece of feminist research? While I am in full agreement and sympathy with certain themes of feminist research, I am reluctant to commit to feminist theory and feminist theology in their entirety.<sup>296</sup> The theme, focus and research design here are clearly within the purview of feminist theology, and I reiterate at numerous points my commitment to women's experience. However I would not self-designate as feminist and, further, I believe that the participants of this study would not identify themselves as feminist,

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<sup>294</sup> Kitzinger, 'Feminist Approaches,' 127.

<sup>295</sup> Denise Ackerman and Riet Bons-Storm *Liberating Faith Practices: Feminist Practical Theologies in Context*, (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 4.

<sup>296</sup> Reddie, *Black Theology in Transatlantic Dialogue*, 93.

or even as womanist for that matter.<sup>297</sup> For Pentecostal women their faith and the Bible are central to who they are and as such they would ‘take aim’ at “[f]eminist theologians [who] take aim at Christianity as a religion of patriarchy”. Countless feminist theologians “deny the revelatory status of androcentric and sexist biblical texts,” while others “create new liturgies for naming and celebrating the divine in relation to women’s experiences”.<sup>298</sup> Pentecostal women read the Bible to “meet God in the text and to provide an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak into [their] spirits”. Many Pentecostal women would for the most part oppose “the language of feminism and the autonomy and aggressiveness they think it supports”.<sup>299</sup>

## 2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have identified practical theology as appropriate for the task of exploring the spirituality of BBPW in that it begins with praxis. I briefly explored some of the methodological challenges associated with this study before presenting qualitative research and the use of focus groups as a data collection tool. Some of the challenges associated with the use of qualitative research and focus groups have been explored as they pertain to gender and the role of the researcher.

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<sup>297</sup> Reddie supports this claim from his experience of teaching black female Christians. He states that those women with ‘conservative theological and philosophical views would not identify themselves as feminists or womanists’ see Reddie, *Black Theology*, 89.

<sup>298</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 2.

<sup>299</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 3.

## Chapter 3

### **Black British Pentecostal Women: History of Spirituality**

This chapter is an exploration of literature which brings to the fore some of the push-pull factors which precipitated Jamaican women's migration to England as it relates to the development of a Jamaican brand of Pentecostalism in Britain. The aim is to highlight the distinctive history and experience of Black British women, notwithstanding the parallels with the histories and experiences of women in general and other Black women in particular. This locational distinction is important, however, as discussions about Black British people tend to overlook their original context, particularly their religious context. The parameters of this work prevent a full discussion of the influence of African Religion, a significant component of BBPW's religious history, therefore emphasis will be made mainly on the influence of Jamaica, the crucible for much of their Pentecostal experience.<sup>300</sup> This discussion further surveys these women's destination (Britain), their faith (Christianity), the expression of that faith (Jamaican Pentecostalism) and the appropriation of that faith in a British context, what I will call Black British Pentecostalism (BBP).<sup>301</sup>

During the 1950s and 1960s large numbers of young West Indian women of all social classes migrated to Great Britain from the Caribbean.<sup>302</sup> This exodus occurred for a variety of

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<sup>300</sup> Joe Aldred, *Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity* (Peterborough, Epworth Press, 2005), 9-10; John Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White - The Black Church Tradition in 'Mainstream' Churches in England: a White Response and Testimony* (Edinburgh, Scotland: St Andrews Press, 1993), 13.

<sup>301</sup> Anthony Reddie, *Working against the Grain*, (London: Equinox, 2008), 115; Black British Pentecostal Churches or what Reddie refers to as Black led or Black Majority Pentecostal Denominational Churches are those whose origins are in the Caribbean.

<sup>302</sup> Diane Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis: Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 22-24. Austin-Broos states Jamaicans had been moving to different countries from the 1800s to the 1920's in search of work. John Catron, 'Evangelical Networks in the Greater Caribbean and the Origins of the Black Church,' *Church History* 79, no. 2 (March 2010): 77 – 114. Catron

reasons: some women had been recruited by British public sector employers, others travelled independently to pursue a career or to study, while others wished to join husbands or fiancés.<sup>303</sup> The vast majority of the émigrés were skilled workers who, like most economic migrants, were in pursuit of better employment opportunities.<sup>304</sup> In the case of Jamaica's women, they were leaving a country where the cost of living had doubled during the Second World War; where unemployment was high; and where Hurricane Charlie had further added to the islanders' suffering and hardship.<sup>305</sup> Many women who migrated were from Christian backgrounds or were regular church attendees, so we can assume this was because Christianity in general, and Pentecostalism in particular, was states Austin Broos, a "religious hegemony".<sup>306</sup> These women would have been unaware that they would play a major role in

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suggests that Jamaican Christians would travel between the islands and America spreading the message of Evangelical Christianity; Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 372, 374; Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 1. Most of the migrants would have been under the age of thirty. Dissimilar to many migratory patterns, where for the most part the numbers of male émigrés are substantively greater, the proportion of Caribbean women to Caribbean men which migrated to Britain were relatively high.

<sup>303</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago Press, 1986) 25; Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 1. In June 1948 the *SS Empire Windrush* brought 498 West Indians, mainly Jamaicans to England, among them was 1 female stowaway. By 1961 the number of West Indians in Britain had increased to 172,379. Unlike other migratory trends the proportions of women to men were roughly equal. Anthony Reddie, *Black Theology in Transatlantic Dialogue* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 9-10. Doreen Morrison, *Reaching for the Promised Land: The Role of Culture Issues of Leadership and Social Stratification within British Caribbean Christianity*. Unpublished Ph.D. (University of Birmingham, 2010), 91. The majority of the men and women that migrated to England were in their twenties.(see Peter Fryer, *Staying Power* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 374.)

<sup>304</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 374, 375. Fryer states that of the West Indians who came to Britain – it is not clear which years he is referring – 13 per cent of the men had no skills and 5 per cent of the women. One in four men were non-manual workers and over half the women. 46 per cent of men were skilled manual workers and 27 percent of women. Yet many were employed in positions of a lower status than in the Caribbean.

<sup>305</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 373.

<sup>306</sup> Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 90; Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid,' 46. Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 1. The émigrés were probably expecting the same sort of hegemony in England; Wedenoja

the establishment and development of the Black Pentecostal church and the Black presence in Britain's historic churches, designated collectively as the Black Majority Church.<sup>307</sup> The author is aware of the presence of churches in Britain which originate in Africa. These include the spiritual churches and the neo-Pentecostal churches such as Redeemed Christian Church of God. However this work focus' on the women from the Windrush Generation, who hailed from the Caribbean. This chapter focuses specifically upon their influence and contribution to the Pentecostal church in Britain. As these women settled in Britain, subsequently bearing children themselves and helping to raise grandchildren, their ethnicity and that of their sons and daughters were variously termed; in this work I will use the terms 'Black British' and 'African-Caribbean' interchangeably but with reference to Black people in Britain who could and can trace their ancestry to Jamaica or the Caribbean.<sup>308</sup>

### **3.1. Challenges to the Survey**

As stated in previous chapters, the limited number of studies on Black British women of Caribbean heritage presents a challenge. That gap is further compounded by the androcentric nature of literature on Jamaica's history, including the migration of its women to Great Britain during the post war years. This is further compounded by the androcentrism apparent in the reported development of Black Pentecostalism in Britain and this despite the commonly accepted view that women played a major role in the movement's progress in

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states in 1943 census data recorded Pentecostals as accounting for 4% of the Jamaica's population by 1970 this had risen to 20%. Data from a church survey in northern Clarendon, the geographical heart of Pentecostalism in Jamaica record that in 1969 45% of all church goers attended Pentecostal churches while 45% attended denominational churches (see William Wedenoja, 'Modernization and the Pentecostal Movement in Jamaica,' 30-31.)

<sup>307</sup> Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid,' 45-68; Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 85-107.

<sup>308</sup> Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 1- 4. See Nicole Toulis, *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England* (Oxford: Berg, 1997).



Britain.<sup>309</sup> Hence where the literature has been androcentric, I have made the subject female, taking the view that the writer had people in general in mind, except where explicitly stated.

### **3.2. The Development of Jamaican People: A Historical Overview**

The island now known as Jamaica was initially inhabited by a people group known as the Tainos. Rouse writes that the word *Taino*, means ‘good and noble’ was used as a self-identifier by the indigenes to refer to themselves, it would have been one of the first words Columbus heard.<sup>310</sup> The exact number of Tainos living on the island prior to their contact with Europeans is unknown but the number was so great that Las Casas described them as ‘ants on an ant hill’.<sup>311</sup> Their first documented contact with Europeans was in 1494, when the island was disclosed to Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus and his crew. Columbus described Jamaica as “the fairest island that eyes have beheld”.<sup>312</sup> Although Columbus had heard the noun Taino he likely referred to them as ‘Indians’ a term used by Europeans for all indigenous people. They were described as ‘more enlightened, kind and gentle’ than the peoples Columbus had previously come into contact with on the other islands. One of the intentions of the Spanish was to convert the Taino to Roman Catholicism, but this intention was superseded by the desire for gold, and when no gold was found in Jamaica, the Tainos were put to work on another venture. Gold was found in Hispaniola and other islands, so the Tainos and their Jamaica with its ‘fertile land and good tasting fruit’ became the suppliers of

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<sup>309</sup> Robert Beckford, Anthony Reddie and Joe Aldred three theologians who research and discuss BMCs agree that women were integral in its development. See below 3.6. Missing! The Black British Pentecostal Woman.

<sup>310</sup> M. Mordecai, and P. Mordecai, *Culture and Customs of Jamaica*, 6; Irving Rouse, *The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1993), 5.

<sup>311</sup> B de Las Casas, *An account of the first voyages and discoveries made by the Spaniards in America : containing the most exact relation hitherto publish'd, of ...* London,.1699 (online: available from Sabin American 1500 -1926).

<sup>312</sup> M. Mordecai, and P. Mordecai, *Culture and Customs of Jamaica* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 7.

food for the Spanish on the other islands.<sup>313</sup> D. H. Figueredo and Frank Argote-Freyre explain the system called the *ecomienda* that was introduced to the island. Ecomienda involved the Spanish settlers (*ecomenderos*) being given a plot of land and three hundred Tainos as labour. The Tainos were to do all the work and the *ecomenderos* were responsible for Christianising the Taino, which is providing Roman Catholic instruction along with military protection. The settlers state, Figueredo and Argote-Freyre, did not live up to their responsibilities but brutally mistreated the Taino. 600,000 Taino lived on the island of Hispaniola in 1492, but by 1510 that number had fallen to 200, although the deaths were not all due to poor treatment as the introduction of European diseases also played a role.<sup>314</sup> The treatment of the Tainos was so appalling that Dominican priest Las Casas wrote to King Ferdinand of Spain asking for his intervention.

As a result of the loss of their workforce due to death and disease, the Spanish were left with the problem of insufficient labour to work the land. The solution would come from Africa. Las Casas suggested that Africans be used to work the land in the Caribbean for seemingly pragmatic reasons: they were more used to the climate, they were capable of hard labour and, additionally, if Africans were used, the Tainos would be spared some of the hardship they were enduring. Slaves from West Africa were already an integral part of

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<sup>313</sup> Irving Rouse, *The Tainos*, 156.

<sup>314</sup> D. H. Figueredo and Frank Argote-Freyre, *A Brief History of the Caribbean* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 27; Bartolomé de la Casas, *An account of the first voyages and discoveries made by the Spaniards in America [electronic resource] : containing the most exact relation hitherto publish'd, of their unparallel'd cruelties on the Indians, in the destruction of above forty millions of people : with the propositions offer'd to the King of Spain to prevent the further ruin of the West-Indies / by Don Bartholomew de las Casas ; to which is added, The art of travelling, shewing how a man may dispose his travels to the best advantage.* n.p.: London : Printed by J. Darby for D. Brown, J. Harris, and Andr. Bell , 1699. Regent University Library and Law Library Catalog, EBSCOhost (accessed December 28, 2014).

Spanish society. Roberts distinguishes between Ladino Blacks who were already in Spain and those Africans who were brought directly from West Africa, *bozal*.<sup>315</sup>

In 1655 the British captured Jamaica by default. The British had initially planned to attack Hispaniola the then administrative and maritime centre of Spain in the Caribbean, but the greatly outnumbered British were defeated.<sup>316</sup> To save face the British went to Jamaica, which was less well fortified. The Spanish settlers surrendered to the British in return for safe passage back to Europe. Before leaving, the Spanish ‘freed’ their African slaves, who were to become known as the Maroons. The Maroons not wanting to work for the British fled to the hills. Despite the Spanish settlers’ surrender of the land to the British, Spain did not relinquish sovereignty of the island until 1670.<sup>317</sup>

Historian James Walvin argues that Jamaica’s African enslaved society came into existence as a product of Britain’s addiction to sugar, that invisible ingredient which sweetened the naturally bitter, but popular, beverages tea and coffee and gave rise to the ‘British pudding’.<sup>318</sup> He continues by contrasting the consumption of sugar in the early 1700s during which the British population consumed 4lb of sugar per capita. This compared to one hundred years later in which consumption had increased to 18lbs per capita.<sup>319</sup> The cultivation and processing of the raw product, sugar cane, was both arduous and labour

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<sup>315</sup> Peter Roberts, *Roots of Caribbean Identity*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 36. In the 15th century a system was already in place in which enslaved peoples were already being used in European colonies near Africa. Africa was a country of hundreds of states including warring nations that benefited from the capture of enemies that could then be sold into slavery. Some tribes and slaves went to war with the express purpose of taking slaves

<sup>316</sup> M. Mordecai, and P. Mordecai, *Culture and Customs of Jamaica*, 6; Irving Rouse, *The Tainos*, 8.

<sup>317</sup> M. Mordecai, and P. Mordecai, *Culture and Customs of Jamaica*, 6

<sup>318</sup> William Wedenoja, ‘Modernization and the Pentecostal Movement in Jamaica’ in *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Latin America*, ed. Stephen D Glazier (Lanham: University Press of America, 1980), 27; Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 5, 269, 279.

<sup>319</sup> James Walvin, *Black Ivory: Slavery in the British Empire* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 5.

intensive, and additionally, successful cultivation necessitated particular growing conditions. While the conquering and colonization of islands in the Caribbean took care of both the climatic and geographical requirements for sugar cultivation, the production of sugar in quantities sufficient to meet the growing demand would require a labour force the number and mettle of which Britain could not provide. This demand could only be met by the forcible removal of nearly 900,000 Africans from their homeland, a practice, argues Walvin, which was perpetuated by racism, prejudice and eventually avarice.<sup>320</sup> Sugar production by means of slave labour lay behind the prosperity of the British ports of London, Bristol and Liverpool. A prosperity which only added to the further propulsion of the slave trade.<sup>321</sup> It was primarily people from West Africa, the then Gold Coast and Nigeria who were brought to Jamaica. Certain people groups from Ghana (Akan) have left an imprint on Jamaican culture, with hundreds of words that are used in the country needing no translation into Twi.<sup>322</sup>

In Jamaica, during slavery women worked just as hard as men on the plantations. In the 1790s around 58 per cent of the slaves in the field were female, and forty years later the proportion had risen to 65 per cent.<sup>323</sup> As domestic servants, females were overwhelmingly in the majority, and as such they were skilled in providing the services needed to run plantation houses and town homes. A key role assumed by Black women alongside the forced labour, both during slavery and following emancipation was that of keeping the community/family

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<sup>320</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 19; Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 269.

<sup>321</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 19; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 149; *Black Ivory*, 269.

<sup>322</sup> L. E. Barrett, 'African roots in Jamaican indigenous Religion,' *Journal of Religious Thought*. 35 no.1(1978), 7-26: 13.

<sup>323</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 107-108.

together.<sup>324</sup> Male slaves and children could be sold or transferred at any time, and in such cases females assumed the role of both mother and father.<sup>325</sup> Following the abolition of slavery, women continued in this role, but in the midst of the prevailing Victorian patriarchal value system, a system that Jamaica's ruling elite adopted, the Black woman's role as keeper/leader became ambiguous.<sup>326</sup> She found herself at an impasse between her assumed role as keeper/leader and prevailing societal expectations for women. Alexander comments that this 'headship dilemma' was reflected in various realms and probably most in the church.<sup>327</sup>

From the time of the American Civil War (1861–65), the United States came to have an economic interest in the Jamaica, fuelled principally by the country's exportation of bananas. The revenues received from that trade strengthened Jamaica's emerging middle class. As this class grew, so too did the concomitant need for goods and services, which in turn swelled the ranks of both the middle class and the urban lower class, particularly women and, therefore, Pentecostals, according to Austin-Broos.<sup>328</sup> Women worked for and offered services to the middle classes in the form of domestic, personal and micro enterprises.<sup>329</sup> The

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<sup>324</sup> Roswith Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theologies: The Black Church Movement in Britain in its Transatlantic Cultural and Theological Interaction with Special Reference to the Pentecostal Oneness (Apostolic) and Sabbatarian Movements*. Vol. 1 (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 175; Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 88.

<sup>325</sup> Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theologies*, 175; Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 88. Although the slave trade was abolished in 1807, the British colonies were not granted full freedom until 1838 (see Walvin, *Black Ivory* xiv-xv).

<sup>326</sup> Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 89; Jamaica's ruling elite consisted of whites, light-skinned and multiracial people. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, *If it wasn't for the Women*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 7; Black women continue to keep their families together. Gilkes opines that economic disadvantage is such that today many women have to work. Occupying the role of economic provider is often at odds with the 'normative (or hegemonic) patriarchy.'

<sup>327</sup> Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 89.

<sup>328</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 22.

<sup>329</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 22.

trade in bananas was about to be negatively affected due to a number of factors. First, Jamaica's banana trade was in competition with that from Central and South American countries. Second, the United States had monopolistic tendencies over the industry which affected the price that bananas could be traded and finally Jamaica was hit by the effects of five hurricanes between 1903 and 1921 which severely affected Jamaica's industry and hence the incomes of Jamaicans.

While many Jamaicans worked in the country's banana industry, another source of employment was found in Panama and Cuba. In the late 1800s men had begun to migrate from Jamaica to Panama or Cuba. In Panama they built railroads and the Panama Canal, whilst in Cuba they worked in the sugar industry. The drain of the male workforce resulted in women filling the labour gap in Jamaica, where they had to work the land during a "period [that] presented the vagaries of a regional economy".<sup>330</sup> In addition to bearing the effects of gender stratification, women continued in the familial leadership/headship role.<sup>331</sup> Not all women remained in Jamaica, with some 25,000 women moving to Panama to work in domestic and personal services.

The 1952 *McCarran-Walter Act*, states Fryer, restricted people from many countries, including the West Indies, from entering the United States, an occurrence which previously had been both straightforward and commonplace.<sup>332</sup> This new attitude was to have ramifications for Jamaicans. Life in Jamaica was not easy, with no economic assistance of any kind, it was a wonder that so many Jamaicans remained.<sup>333</sup> Many thousands of young Jamaicans did leave in search of new opportunities, in many cases were recruited and

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<sup>330</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 23; Foner, 'Gender and Migration,' 5; Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 10.

<sup>331</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 23; Foner, 'Gender and Migration,' 5; Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 10.

<sup>332</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 374; Bryan et al, *The Heart of the Race*, 21.

<sup>333</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 373.

encouraged to migrate to Britain, with its post-war labour shortage and the restriction on immigration to the US an opportunity to go to Britain was even more appealing.<sup>334</sup> In 1948 the *Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury in the United Kingdom with 492 Jamaicans. Although the need for more labour continued, in the following five years, the number of Jamaicans who migrated to England was relatively low. But within ten years of the *Windrush* first docking, 125,000 West Indians had entered Britain.<sup>335</sup>

As discussed above, economic migration was not alien to Jamaicans, there was a tradition of migration to other islands and to North and Central America. Austin-Broos supports this assertion by noting that from the 1800s to the 1920s Jamaicans had been leaving Jamaica in search of work. In my assessment this further demonstrates that the migration Jamaican women's later to Britain was not a unique occurrence. Additionally, unlike their British counterparts Jamaican women were used to working outside the home, something patriarchal values discouraged for British women.

### **3.3. The Development of Jamaican Christianity**

I noted above that people were forcibly taken primarily from West Africa to work in Jamaica. Yet despite the different countries and people groups there existed, states Paris,

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<sup>334</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 373; Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 31.

<sup>335</sup> June 1948 – Empire Windrush brought 492 Jamaicans, October 1948 – The Orbita brought 180; Reina del Pacifico three months later brought 39 of which 15 were women; 1949 Georgic had 253 Caribbean's aboard of whom 45 were female. 1950, a few hundred 1951 about 1000, 1952 and 1953 about 2000 respectively. Larger numbers arrived in the next four years including many wives and children of men who were already in Britain. 24,000 in 1954, 26,000 in 1956; 22,000 in 1957; 16,000 in 1958. Fryer, *Staying Power* 372. Foner states the immigration slowed considerably in the 1960s due to the passing of immigration law which restricted immigration particularly from the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent. Increases in the population was due to the increase in British born children.

commonalities across the various African cosmologies.<sup>336</sup> Prior to the introduction of Christianity by European missionaries, African men and women had already developed ways of expressing and interpreting their experience of God.<sup>337</sup> In other words there was not a spiritual vacuum, but rather, argues Leonard Barrett, there existed within the African a “cultural coding or programming of an individual”.<sup>338</sup> A programming that is so engrained can be modified but not eradicated. Religion, continues Barrett, is at the core of this coding. I share this perspective of something innate that is instrumental to the survival of African diasporan women. The overview of history presented above demonstrates the circumstances which brought African women to Jamaica. Books, documentaries and films have for decades depicted the horrors of slavery and yet Jamaican women have survived with their creativity intact. This innate structuring device Leonard Barrett calls ‘soul force’.<sup>339</sup> Mbiti suggests that it is demonstrated in African Traditional Religion or ATR. John Mbiti writes:

Wherever the African is, there is [her] religion: [s]he carries it to the fields where [s]he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; [s]he takes it with [her] to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if [s]he is educated, [s]he takes religion with [her] to the examination room at school or in the university; if [s]he is a politician [s]he takes it to the house of parliament.<sup>340</sup>

In my assessment this description suggests that ATR or ‘soul force’ is not just the worship of God, gods, or ancestors but is also an experience of God, an experience that was transported to and communicated in the West Indies. With peoples coming from different

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<sup>336</sup> Paris, *Spirituality of African People*, 18. This issue is contested with those such as John Mbiti who contends that Africans have many religions but common religious philosophy and others such as E. Bolaji Iduwu who maintains that African religions essentially has one God but many deities.

<sup>337</sup> A. E. Orabator, *Theology in an African Pot*, 14.

<sup>338</sup> Leonard Barrett, ‘African Roots in Jamaican Indigenous Religions,’ *Journal of Religious Thought*, 35 (March 1978):7-26; 9.

<sup>339</sup> Barrett, ‘African Roots in Jamaican Indigenous Religions,’ 9.

<sup>340</sup> John S Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1969), 2.



areas of Africa and having to live and work closely together, invariably a fusion of a variety of African religious expressions resulted. This point is also made by Olupona in short that prior to the introduction of Christianity, the enslaved Africans already had their own belief system, which over the years and through successive generations was adapted to complement their new context.<sup>341</sup> Certain beliefs were common to most people such as belief in a supreme god, belief in the ancestors who were understood as being very much a part of the now, and belief in the power of natural phenomena. Ancestors could manifest in dreams or possess the living in ritual dances. Human beings were thought to be essentially spirit, and it was necessary that at death rites be properly performed, to ensure that the spirit remained benign and not hostile to the living.

African religious adaptation to a Jamaican context included application of new names. According to Barrett African fetish specialists were now known as Obeah men and Obeah women and their practice was known as Obeah.<sup>342</sup> They and their practice represented an accepted method of predicting and controlling certain anxiety-producing phenomena. While Myalism or spirit worship was another adaptation. This religion dealt with the collective problems of the community. It was also thought to nullify the effects of Obeah.<sup>343</sup> Myal rituals, Leonard continues, were important as they ensured the welfare of the departed spirit and the spiritual welfare of those left behind. Myal men and women were expert in the use of herbs and natural remedies. While Myalism dealt with communal problems, Obeah was more individualistic.

James Walvin provides valuable insight into the influence of Christianity in the West Indies in general and in Jamaica in particular. The Anglican Church was introduced in 1655

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<sup>341</sup> Jacob K. Olupona, 'Introduction', xv.

<sup>342</sup> Barrett, 'African Roots in Jamaican Indigenous Religions,' 15

<sup>343</sup> Barrett, 16

when the island was captured. The purpose of its existence was not to evangelise but rather to meet the spiritual needs of the plantocracy, as such it acted as a kind of chaplaincy.<sup>344</sup>

Walvin continues that unlike the plantation owners of North America, British plantation owners in the Caribbean were resistant to the conversion of slaves and refused to “share their high liturgy with a lesser breed”.<sup>345</sup> Shirley Gordon argues that first non-conformist missionaries to Jamaica found the Anglican oversight, however, to be barely Christian with the average Sunday attendance at the parish church of St Elizabeth and West Moreland around seven white attenders. In Spanish Town and Kingston, the capital, the congregation mainly comprised colonial officials and garrisons.<sup>346</sup> Charles Leslie states, for their part, the Anglican clergy were described in 1740 as men “character so vile, that I do not care to mention it; for except a few, they are the most finished of our Debauchees”.<sup>347</sup> Patterson states

“holy orders were readily given to men who were imperfectly educated and of indifferent moral character. One minister bemoaned that fact that ‘the clerical office in Jamaica was a sort of dernier resort to men who had not succeeded in other professions’”.<sup>348</sup>

This segregated practice corresponded with the ethos of British colonial rule, which was one of detachment, both culturally and emotionally, and evidently also religiously.

Further, Walvin suggests, the plantocracy opposed Black conversion and baptism to

Christianity because, first, Black Christians would complicate the plantocracy’s relationship

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<sup>344</sup> E. Davis, *The Birth and Growth of Four Jamaican Churches*, 2001), 38.

<sup>345</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 163; Barrett, 14.

<sup>346</sup> S. Gordon, *God Almighty Make Me Free: Christianity in preemancipation Jamaica* [online] (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 8. Available from NetLibrary accessed March 24 2010.

<sup>347</sup> Charles Leslie, *A New History of Jamaica: From the Earliest Accounts, to the Taking of Porto Bello by Vice-Admiral Vernon* (London: Printed for J. Hodges, 1740), 303.

<sup>348</sup> Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development, and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1969), 47; Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 164-165.

with their enslaved people and, second, Christianity would undermine the planters' authority, perhaps encouraging the enslaved to 'get above themselves', and, third, it raised the question of the connection between conversion and freedom; did baptism emancipate?<sup>349</sup> By 1690 however planters in Jamaica were urged by a local Act to baptize all enslaved people who could 'understand the Deity and Christian faith'.<sup>350</sup> With few exceptions the diktat had little effect because unlike Roman Catholicism, which required little instruction prior to baptism, Protestantism required the individual to undergo elaborate instruction (catechesis).

The debate about the religious lives of slaves in the English Empire had been going on for at least fifteen years before Fox published *To the Ministers*. With the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the Church of England finally clarified its position on slave conversion and made it clear that all slave owners should actively seek to convert their slaves to Christianity. In 1661, the British Parliament instructed Lord Willoughby, the reinstated governor of Barbados, to "[win] such as are purchased...as slaves to the Christian faith and [make] them capable of being baptized thereinto."<sup>351</sup>

All non-Christian people were thought of as infidels this included the African. This Act acknowledged that the 'infidel' slaves had souls and therefore were human, but further if baptized, in theory at least, should not be a slave according to English law. This law had effect in England but not in the West Indies. In England, states to Fryer, baptized slaves were free from slavery, meaning they could not be bought and sold, but not from service.<sup>352</sup> Further concerning baptism, the plantocracy questioned whether the enslaved had the mental capability to understand the Christian faith; moreover in the planters' minds, the only

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<sup>349</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 164; E. Davis, *The Birth and Growth of Four Jamaican Churches*, (2001), 40.

<sup>350</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 164.

<sup>351</sup> Katharine Reid Gerbner, 'Christian Slavery: Protestant Missions and Slave Conversion in the Atlantic World, 1660-1760' (Doctoral diss., Harvard University. 2013), 92. <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:11095959> [accessed March 26 2016]

<sup>352</sup> For a further treatment of slavery and the law see Peter Fryer, *Staying Power* Chapter 6, 'Slavery and the Law'

education and teaching enslaved people needed involved skills necessary to carry out plantation work.<sup>353</sup>

In 1754 a small and isolated group of Moravian missionaries arrived in Jamaica to evangelise the enslaved. Their mission was followed by African-American Baptists, who were to have the most significant influence.<sup>354</sup> George Leile, an African-American Baptist and former slave in Georgia, attracted congregations of up to eight hundred Black people and opened a chapel in 1793.<sup>355</sup> By 1802 one of Leile's followers had established another chapel in Kingston, attracting five hundred Black congregants.

Walvin makes some useful observations regarding the impact of the 'Great Awakening' and its effect on how American Christianity came to be understood as it related to slavery. First, the Great Awakening enhanced the religiosity of plantocracy, many of whom were persuaded to allow (encourage) their slaves to attend church. Second, an understanding of the minutiae of Christian doctrine was not as important as an understanding of the conversion experience as the work of God in the heart, a part of God's saving grace. Third, revivalism involved a sense of equality and was conducted amidst scenes of enthusiasm. Meetings took place in public and baptisms were conducted in the local rivers, a ritual which reminded the enslaved of their African past.<sup>356</sup> Walvin points out that such Christian expression was the case in the American South, but in the British Caribbean the situation was different as the plantocracy were "reluctant to see their slaves converted and baptised" while the first group of missionaries to arrive in Jamaica were the Moravians in

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<sup>353</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 164

<sup>354</sup> See Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 165. Gordon, S. *God Almighty Make Me Free*. C. Ballew, 'The Impact of African American Antecedents on the Baptist Foreign Missionary Movement 1782-1825.' Ph.D. Thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002.

<sup>355</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 165.

<sup>356</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 160-161, 166.

1754, in the US, initial efforts to convert the enslaved began in 1706.<sup>357</sup> I assert that the form of Christianity presented by the Moravians may well have been influenced by the revivals of the Great awakening of Germany and subsequently America. It was John Catron who suggested that the Great Awakening from 1750 onwards was a catalyst which brought about the construction of networks of Black and White evangelical Christians which he states spanned the Carolinas, Georgia, *and* the British and Dut

ch West Indies. This was as a consequence of increased travel between these areas.<sup>358</sup> The impact of such networks is exemplified in the case of George Leile. Catron makes the case that there was an exchange of evangelical Christians from the US but the presence of the Moravians may well have influenced prevailing views too.

The work of the missionary was not easy; there were a number of challenges with which to contend. For instance living conditions were often inadequate and the climate unfavourable, many missionaries died at a young age, with only a few surviving more than ten years. The missionaries' easy-going democratic style, which augmented their declaration that the enslaved were part of the brotherhood of man, endeared them to the enslaved but provoked resistance from the planters. Additionally, communication with the slaves was problematic at both verbal and non-verbal levels, with the 'patois' or 'African languages' spoken by the enslaved, they were not understood by the missionaries – this was possibly a deliberate ploy of the slaves. Finally, the missionaries had to contend with the remnants of the rites and rituals of African traditional religions which were still practiced.<sup>359</sup> The missionaries were all too aware of the difficulties implicit in conveying the message of Christianity, but they also faced the challenges of enforcing a Christian moral lifestyle.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 165, 159.

<sup>358</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 160-161, 166; John Catron, 'Evangelical Networks in the Greater Caribbean,' 80.

<sup>359</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 165

<sup>360</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 166.

Walvin comments that missionaries were perhaps pessimistic about their accomplishments and influence.

Yet whatever the extent of the acceptance of the Christian message, the missionaries had exposed the people to a new range of alternatives, with the primary alternative being that the world could be different from the one they were currently experiencing.<sup>361</sup> Where there is belief that the future can be different, the perspective on the present is transformed.<sup>362</sup> While missionaries stressed the importance of obedience as illustrated in the Bible, the enslaved had begun to reinterpret what they were taught. The Christian understanding of heaven and hell had resonance with the slaves. For the enslaved hell was on earth, while heaven was somewhere to look forward to. The planters were preparing a rod for their own backs through their obstruction of the missionaries' work, their open hostility to missionaries, and their violent attacks on chapels and the homes of preachers. Opposition such as this convinced enslaved people that missionaries were on their side.<sup>363</sup> By the 1830s many slaves were Christian and, as described by Walvin, their expression was

distinctive, enthusiastic, noisy, communal and sociable in the practice and protestation. When they sang, chanted, danced, swooned and shrieked at their worship, they reminded outsiders of the older African slaves when worshipping. The slaves invested Christianity with a style and energy that was African; declamatory where whites tended to be silent, ecstatic where others were tranquil, collective where others were silently individualistic.<sup>364</sup>

However, enslaved Caribbean Blacks soon realised that their conversion to Christianity, indicated by baptism, did not convey emancipation, equality or even acceptance by Europeans.

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<sup>361</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 166.

<sup>362</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 4.

<sup>363</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 166.

<sup>364</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 168.

### 3.3.1. The Introduction and Influence of Pentecostalism in Jamaica: A Synopsis

It was against this historical background that Pentecostalism was introduced to the island around 1910, probably as part of the free communications that had been taking place between Jamaica and the United States. The communication was due, at least in part, to the growth in banana exportation noted above. Within twenty years Pentecostalism had made a marked impact on the island despite the fact that Pentecostalism was introduced to the Caribbean not fully formed.<sup>365</sup> The Topeka Revival took place in 1901 and the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, although these early years have been referred to as the heart of Pentecostalism – at the time ramifications of these occurrences were still in development,<sup>366</sup> Yet by 1922 Jamaica's national paper, the *Daily Gleaner* reported a baptism conducted by the Apostolic Church of God (later known as the Pentecostal Holiness Church of God). In the mid-1920s the same paper reported services of the Pentecostal Church of God in Christ, a missionary outreach of C. H. Mason's Church of God in Christ.<sup>367</sup> North American and Caribbean Pentecostalism developed hand in hand.<sup>368</sup> While some Jamaican churches kept their North American allegiances, others became independent.<sup>369</sup> A hallmark of Jamaican

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<sup>365</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 21–24. During the late 1800 there were at least eight trading companies along Jamaica's northern shore. Such companies facilitated the relatively free passage of people goods and information commercial, political and religious. Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 80.

<sup>366</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 80; Walter Hollenweger, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement,' in *The Study of Spirituality*, ed. Jones, Cheslyn, Wainwright, Geoffrey, and Yarnold, Edward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 551. MacRobert states that the Pentecostal movement spread to Jamaica within four years of its eruption in Los Angeles. Iain MacRobert, *Black Pentecostalism: Its' Origins, Functions and Theology with special reference to a Midland Borough* (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham. 1989), 126.

<sup>367</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 101.

<sup>368</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 80.

<sup>369</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 101, 167.

Pentecostalism has been its process of indigenization, with its acquisition of a cultural connotation in an island context that is not identical with Pentecostalism in North America.<sup>370</sup>

Key to a Jamaican's understanding of self and the world is Christian lore. Austin-Broos states that Christianity in general and Pentecostalism in particular are perceived as the regional hegemony, an exogenous antagonistic force to the island's culture.<sup>371</sup>

Pentecostalism, however, along with its redemptive, pneumatological and spiritual affectation, was on many levels, as will be demonstrated, a social movement, and a movement which unlike other Christian expressions provided a response to Jamaica's twentieth-century environment.

The tenets of the movement provided an interpretation of social events "from within a specifically Christian cosmos rather than a secular one".<sup>372</sup> Socio-racial hierarchical structures placed the black, poor, landless or cultivating as subjugated to the middle class. While Jamaican nationalism and Rastafarianism helped men to respond to such structures, argues Austin-Broos, they did little for the aforementioned groups. Jamaican Pentecostalism with its emphasis on group participation, exercise of healing, spiritual recompense and possession appealed to African and/or Revivalist tendencies. Crucially Pentecostalism did not seek to 'topple or invert' the existing social order, as was the case with Rastafarianism, but rather sought to "redefine social hierarchy and claim integration with it in order for adherents to aspire towards upward mobility".<sup>373</sup> Such redefinition would ultimately challenge the societal status quo. Formerly affiliation to the colonial and historic denominations

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<sup>370</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 80, 109; Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theologies*, 49.

<sup>371</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 1. By this Austin-Broos refers to the idea of redemption, an idea which was introduced to black Jamaicans by Christians. This concept is according to Austin-Broos alien to African cultures.

<sup>372</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 21.

<sup>373</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 21.



demonstrated at least a superficial commitment to whites, light skinned and multiracial. These groups were the dominant section of society upon whom status benefits conferred. Such benefits were not available to the other sections of Jamaican society, in particular the poor, the dark-skinned and women.<sup>374</sup>

During its genesis, Jamaican Pentecostalism was endorsed by powerful predominantly White-led churches overseas a status comparable to the historic churches. These affiliation based on colour supported Pentecostalism's credibility among certain groups. Whereas in missionary churches the circumstance and suffering of women and landless Blacks was a presumed indicator of a 'lack of holiness', Pentecostalism through its transformation, cleansing, saving and conveyance of power through the Holy Spirit redefined people and concomitantly social hierarchies. This redefinition, Austin-Broos argues, identified Jamaican Pentecostalism as a movement whose orientation was not in line with the prevailing British colonial and British missionary definitions of social hierarchy but rather was more American-evangelical in outlook.<sup>375</sup> Pentecostalism then became a response adopted by women to address the moral politics of their position in society.<sup>376</sup> I further contend that Jamaicans had a sense of self that possibly the enslaved in America did not. This contention is supported by Diane Stewart, who states that the multiple rebellions that took place in Jamaica were due to the fact that most of the enslaved came directly from Africa, unlike in the United States where most of the enslaved had been born in the United States. This close connection to Africa meant the enslaved did not accept bondage and restraint as their *raison d'être*, and so rebellion and death were options that would enable them to regain their humanity.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 110.

<sup>375</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 22

<sup>376</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis* 25, 32. Austin-Broos points out that Pentecostalism was not the only movement to address female moral politics but it was a prominent one.

<sup>377</sup> D. Stewart, *Three Eyes for the Journey: African Dimensions of the Jamaica Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 18.

### 3.4. Jamaican Women in Great Britain – A Historical Overview

Labels in philosophy and cultural discourse have the character that Derrida ascribes to Plato's pharmakon: they can poison and kill, and they can remedy and cure. We need them to help identify shape and style, a temperament, a set of common concerns and emphases, or a vision that has determinate shape. But we must also be wary of the ways in which they can blind us or reify what is fluid and changing.<sup>378</sup>

The tenets of Bernstein's quote should be borne in mind as the following discussion identifies, shapes and styles Black British women. That said, Black women, including those in this study, are not a homogenous group, which in any analysis should be borne mind so as not to be blinded by what is in constant change.<sup>379</sup>

Roughly a third of the émigrés who came to Britain after the Second World War were female. A good proportion of these women travelled independently, which leads to the assumption that West Indian female émigrés were not only courageous and ambitious but also desired to work.<sup>380</sup> However contemporary perceptions by many British Whites at that

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<sup>378</sup> R.J. Bernstein, 'What is the Difference that makes a Difference? Gadamer, Habermas, and Rorty.' in *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Brice Wachterhauser (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 369.

<sup>379</sup> Toulis, *Believing identity*, 16-18

<sup>380</sup> This large proportion of female migrants can be attributed in part to the passing of the British Immigration Act 197. The Act curbed immigration from the West Indies to only dependents and those with a work permits. Hence the majority of the émigrés permitted to enter Britain as migrants were the wives and children of male émigrés. Nancy Foner, 'Gender and Migration: West Indians in Comparative Perspective,' *International Migration* 47, no 1 (2009): 6. Migration patterns from Jamaica 1955 62% of those migrating from Jamaica were men in 1960 this fell to 57%. The number of children migrating in 1955 were 331 rising to 2430 in 1960. The percentages began to even out due to a number of factors female dependents joining their male relatives' women migrating independently of males for example to study nursing. Malcolm Calley, 'Pentecostal Sects among West Indian Migrants,' *Race and Class* 3 no 2 (January 1962): 55-64. Church membership mirrored this increase. Calley states that in 1961 that the female presence in churches began to increase to the extent that it began to reflect the church in Jamaica. Photographs from that period show that women were gradually outnumbering men and were active in church settings. See Elaine Foster, *Women and the Inverted Pyramid of the Black Church in Britain*.

time held these arrivals to be an ‘immature and incapable workforce’ and ‘slow, lazy and childlike’.<sup>381</sup>

Celebrations in 1998 and beyond commemorating the coming of the SS *Empire Windrush* perhaps inadvertently associate the initial arrival of Black people in Britain with that post-war era. The *Windrush* did not bring the first Black people to Britain, although the ship’s arrival can be used mark the beginning of a specific period of immigration.<sup>382</sup> This was not the Black woman’s first experience of migration as discussed above, nor was it her first experience of Britain as discussed in the following discussion.

Perhaps the earliest evidence of Black female presence in Britain is the skull of a young Black girl found in a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon burial ground in Elmham, Norfolk.<sup>383</sup> Possibly the earliest record of a Black Christian woman is the baptismal record dated 11 December 1504, of a Black woman who was attached to the court of King James IV of Scotland.<sup>384</sup> Records from the 1500s provide evidence that enslaved Black women were brought to Britain, where they were made to work in various capacities. Evidence for the presence of two Black women, Ellen or Helena Moore and Margery Lindsay, is found in the account books of the Scottish court in Holyrood in 1500s. There are records of payments and requests by the Scottish king for the transportation of Ellen and Margery and for the purchase of expensive gowns, slippers and gloves for both them and their maidservants.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Nicole Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 19.

<sup>382</sup> Barnor Hesse, ‘Diasporicity: Black British Post-Colonial Formations,’ in *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, ed. Barnor Hesse (Zed: London, 2001), 97-99.

<sup>383</sup> Paul Edwards, ‘The History of Blacks in Britain’ *History Today* 31 no. 9 (August 1981): 33.

<sup>384</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, 3.

<sup>385</sup> Paul Edwards, ‘The History of Blacks in Britain,’ *History Today* 31, no. 9 (August 1981): 33; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 2-4.

William Dunbar's poem 'Ane Blak Moire', which has been read variously by critics as a "good natured jest", "a joke in poor taste", and a "deeply offensive smear", refers to a Black woman with "thick lips" and a "short cat-like nose".<sup>386</sup> In 1599 Denis Edwards wrote to the Earl of Hertford's secretary to "enquire after and secure my negress [sic]: she is certainly at the 'Swan' a Dane's beer shop, Turnbull Street, Clerkenwell". Fryer understands this as a reference to Black prostitutes in Elizabethan England.<sup>387</sup> Fryer warns against using these sources as support for the presence of a large Black population; on the contrary, throughout the seventeenth century England's Black population was small and scattered. However, in the 1650s numbers began to increase as Black servants in households became fashionable, for they were status symbols which attested to the wealth of their master. From Devon through to Kent a handful of Black laundry maids and pages could be found, young people who lived in noble mansions as household servants.<sup>388</sup> In 1726 Black women were present at a christening, with the two godmothers and their attendants described in a newspaper report as "well drest [sic]".<sup>389</sup> In 1764 a British newspaper reported that Black women 'supped and drank' at a public house in Fleet Street until four in the morning.<sup>390</sup>

Prior to 1750 there are few official records attesting the presence of Black women in Britain, most of the information is gleaned largely from passing statements such as the examples cited above. However from 1750 there exist works of self-expression, "autobiography, political protest, journalism and other published writing by Africans who

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<sup>386</sup>Ron Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain: Five Hundred Years of Black and Asian History*, (London; Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press, 1999), 6. Ramdin uses the spelling Moire.

<sup>387</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, 9.

<sup>388</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, 75.

<sup>389</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, 19.

<sup>390</sup> National Archive 'Blacks Only' Party British Library, Burney 5276b, *London Chronicle*, 16-18 February 1764 [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/work\\_community/relationships.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/work_community/relationships.htm) (accessed February 12 2012)

lived in or visited England and wrote in English”.<sup>391</sup> We find examples in the writings of Phyllis Wheatley (1753–1784), Mary Prince (1788–?), Mary Seacole (1805–1881) and Amanda Smith (1837–1925).<sup>392</sup>

The previous discussion highlights the lives of a few Black women who lived in Britain prior to the Second World War. During this time Black women were present in the palaces of Scotland and Westminster, in noble homes and in public houses. Even as early as the sixteenth century their presence commanded attention, even if limited. Black women came to Great Britain in significant numbers following the Second World War. In 1948, 492 people were aboard the *Empire Windrush* when it docked in Tilbury among them was one female stowaway. In 1949 Georgic had 253 Caribbean’s aboard of which 45 were female and more women would follow. The following section explores some of the motivations behind women migrating to Britain and the context in which they found themselves.

### **3.4.1. Where Was She Going?**

Although the US had all but closed her borders to West Indians, however as a consequence of Britain’s 1948 Nationality Act, citizenship was granted to all Britain’s colonies and former colonies.<sup>393</sup> British citizenship, coupled with the colonial education which many had received, promoted a perception among Jamaicans of Britain as the ‘Motherland’, a land that offered employment and that needed workers to bolster her industry.<sup>394</sup> In some industries the shortage of labour was such that recruiters were sent to Commonwealth countries to enlist prospective workers.<sup>395</sup> This contrasts with Jamaica, which

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<sup>391</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, 67

<sup>392</sup> Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* ed. Sarah Salih. (London: Penguin Books, 2000); Ron Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain*, 34-35.

<sup>393</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 373; Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 31.

<sup>394</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 373; Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 31.

<sup>395</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 373.

had limited employment and where prospects were stark. However, as hard as conditions were in their homeland, the vast majority of women had no intention of remaining in England. Their goal was to gain employment, become financially stable, and in most cases, to then return to Jamaica. For many, financial stability was an unrealistic dream, for despite being over-qualified, many Jamaican women were forced to take low-paid unskilled work. Although discrimination played its part, in the context of full employment the émigrés were needed for the ‘socially undesirable jobs’.<sup>396</sup>

### **3.4.2. Her Reception – By the Community and by Employers**

Despite the Britain’s labour shortage, Fryer and others state, half the country’s general population were to varying degrees prejudiced against black people and as such were unwelcoming to their invited ‘guests’.<sup>397</sup> Such prejudices did not necessarily arise out of their direct contact with the *Windrush* émigrés but rather were the result of prejudice and falsehood about Black people that had evolved over centuries.<sup>398</sup>

From around the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the word ‘black’ was charged with negative connotations, while ‘white’ was generally held to be more virtuous. Black was associated with demons, death, mourning, evil and sin. It was said that in nightmares the devil took the shape of a Black man.<sup>399</sup> Travel writers related tales of African exploration in which the inhabitants were described not only as devils but also as monsters, freaks and

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<sup>396</sup> Toulis *Believing Identity*, 1; Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, *The Heart of the Matter*, 25-28; Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain*, 211.

<sup>397</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 374-375; Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 4. Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, *The Heart of the Matter*, 25-28.

<sup>398</sup> Fryer makes the point that prior to Windrush half of Britain’s population had never met a black person and for those that had the relationship was for the most part casual.

<sup>399</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 135.

undesirables.<sup>400</sup> ‘Blackness, nakedness, lust and immorality’ along with ‘lascivious’ and ‘sexual’ were nouns and adjectives used to describe Africa and Africans.<sup>401</sup> Black women in particular were depicted in print and popular culture as ‘highly sexed’, as ‘harlots open to the whims of African men’.<sup>402</sup> With Black women depicted as and believed to be amoral, the progression, particularly during slavery, to their sexual exploitation, abuse, and mistreatment was perfunctory. Black women’s supposed lasciviousness was used to mask the promiscuity and brutality of European men.<sup>403</sup> In contrast to their European counterparts, African women were not perceived as the weaker vessel, particularly during slavery, when they were in many ways equal to the enslaved male, carrying out the same fieldwork, working in the same gangs and receiving the same punishments.<sup>404</sup>

This view of Black women changed, however, when they worked alongside British Whites in post-war Britain. In this context they were said to be an ‘immature and incapable workforce’ ‘slow, lazy and childlike’ with little experience of ‘routine work, industrial discipline, time keeping and regular attendance’.<sup>405</sup> This prejudice is exemplified in a 1960s by Pollins and Glass who wrote

...coloured people are feared as competitive intruders; they are thought of as promoters of crime and carriers of disease; they are resented when they are poor and envied when they are resourceful and thrifty. They are looked down upon; they are patronised; occasionally they are treated like everyone else.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 136

<sup>401</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 186 -188, 191, Fryer, *Staying Power*, 140.

<sup>402</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 186 -188, 191.

<sup>403</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 114-115, 188, 190. Thomas Thistlewood kept a detailed journal about his sexual exploits among enslaved women (See Walvin, *Black Ivory* 192-193).

<sup>404</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 105, 106. Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race*, 17.

<sup>405</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 19.

<sup>406</sup> Ruth Glass and Harold Pollins, *London’s Newcomers: The West Indian Migrants* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 120.

Although many of the women had travelled to England to find jobs, many trade unions resisted the employment of Black women, with some insisting on a five per cent quota.<sup>407</sup> Many women had to contend with poor conditions, racism and discrimination by their co-workers and bosses.<sup>408</sup> These women for the most part found themselves living in inner-city areas, where the working-class population were often illiterate, prejudiced against black people and hostile to religious practice, which was central to the purview of Jamaican women in general and Pentecostal women in particular.<sup>409</sup>

### 3.4.3. Her Reception – By the Church

Since the Second World War church attendance in Britain had been in slow decline, and in some churches this decline accelerated with the attendance of black people!<sup>410</sup> While various denominational synods and liberal clergy encouraged integration on the basis of “Christian universalism and brotherhood, lay members and many parochial clergy were reluctant to admit Blacks into their fellowship on equal terms”.<sup>411</sup> Wilkinson cites a Jamaican man who on his first visit to an Anglican church gave the vicar his letter of recommendation from his parish priest in Jamaica but yet was summarily ignored by the priest thereafter.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 376.

<sup>408</sup> Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race*, 19-57. Bryan Dadzie and Scafe relate different stories the hardship, discrimination and racism experienced by women in Britain.

<sup>409</sup> Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging Making Contemporary Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 3; Brian V. Street, *Adult Literacy in the United Kingdom a History of Research and Practice*. University of Sussex Brighton, United Kingdom NCAL Technical Report TR95-05 (NOVEMBER 1995), 2-51:13; Michael Wilkinson, *Church in Black and White*, 34; MacRobert, ‘Black Pentecostalism,’ 127.

<sup>410</sup> Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945*, 3; Clifford Hill, ‘From Church to Sect: West Indian Religious Sect Development in Britain,’ *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 10, no. 2 (Summer 1971):114-123: 117.

<sup>411</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 26; Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 33.

<sup>412</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 78.



With regard to Christianity, generally Black people were stereotyped as either heathens who needed to be converted or people from whom a social distance should be maintained. A Black person's interpretation of Christianity was perceived as not only as different but incompatible with 'British Christianity'.<sup>413</sup> Fryer comments that with such concepts and prejudices already in place, it was easier to "slot in a new phenomenon into a pre-existing conceptual pigeon-hole than to do the hard work of rethinking one's concepts".<sup>414</sup>

#### 3.4.4. Support Groups

Far away from their original church, family and friends and hostilely received by many British, émigrés formed informal social groups which tended to be based in homes functioning as hair salons, the only place to get hair styled, or around the 'pardner' system, which was often the only way to get a lump sum for a down payment on a house or the funds to pay for air tickets for dependent family.<sup>415</sup> As well as being spiritual buttresses, these informal groups were a source of social sustenance and support, providing a form of continuity with the Caribbean. Religious participation was/is central to the lives of many Caribbean women, and with two-thirds of church attendees female, understanding of the 'significance and nature of their religious participation' would give an insight to their identity.<sup>416</sup> While the reception by their hosts caused some émigrés to lose faith and walk away from the church, others become part of self-organised fellowships which would later be

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<sup>413</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 26.

<sup>414</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 135.

<sup>415</sup> Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race*, 131. 'Pardner' consists of an individual collecting a set amount of money every week from a number of individuals for a set amount of time. Each week one of the contributors takes can take the total amount of the collection 'draw'.

<sup>416</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 25.

known as the BMPC, upon which I expand in the next section. Others remained committed to the historic Christian denominations of which they had been members in the Caribbean.<sup>417</sup>

### 3.5. Jamaican Pentecostal Women in Britain

At every stage, Black women and their concomitant experiences have played an essential role in the appropriation of the Christian faith, and this British phase would be no different. At the beginning of the twentieth century, women were essentially responsible for the character and rapid spread of Pentecostalism in Jamaica.<sup>418</sup> Melvina E. White, for example, has been described as “the most influential evangelist of the early Pentecostal Apostolic mission in Jamaica”; White was committed to the indigenization of the movement to meet the needs and experiences of Jamaican people. For the most part, she did this independently initially while her husband was in America establishing links with the mother church and later after their divorce.<sup>419</sup> Another figure was Mother J. C. Russell, who was active throughout the 1930s and is known to have convened her own prayer meetings in prominent public meeting places in Kingston, Jamaica’s capital. Russell was also responsible for inviting the United Pentecostal Church in the United States to establish a sister church in Jamaica.<sup>420</sup> Nina Stapleton was an American missionary who was instrumental in the

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<sup>417</sup> Alexander, ‘*A Mouse in a Jungle*,’ 86. Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain*, 276. Ramdin further asserts that it was racism within the native churches that was the impetus for Black people beginning their own churches. Though Lyesight the founder of the New Testament Church of God stated that he was well received by the churches he attended but felt the need to begin a church out of concern for the incoming migrants. Oliver Lyesight, *Forward March: An Autobiography*. (Sedgley, West Midlands: self-published, 1995); Iain MacRobert, ‘Black Pentecostalism,’ 127.

<sup>418</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven* 125. Cox contends that women far more than men are responsible for Pentecostalism’s spread worldwide.

<sup>419</sup> Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theologies*, 168 – 172, Austin-Brooks, *Jamaica Genesis*, 109-114

<sup>420</sup> Austin-Brooks, *Jamaica Genesis*, 114.

conversion of a number of key leaders in Jamaica's Pentecostal movement.<sup>421</sup> It is unlikely that the Pentecostal women (or those who soon were to be Pentecostal) who migrated to Britain knew the extent to which they were to continue the appropriation and spread of Jamaican Pentecostalism in Britain.

### **3.5.1. The Foundations of the Black Pentecostal Church in Britain**

Prior to the 1980s, race and racial oppression were not common themes in theological writing. Further, academic researchers and theologians had not begun to dialogue nor engage with Pentecostalism either as a movement or as a practice. The reception of Black people by the historic church, as discussed above, was a product of prejudice or a lack of knowledge of what to do or think about their brothers and sisters. Suffice it say here that the women found themselves in inner cities whose inhabitants for the most part were anti-religious or a-religious.<sup>422</sup> The Christians with whom they were in contact largely did not display the 'concomitants of authentic faith and spirituality' as Jamaicans understood it.<sup>423</sup>

Their Pentecostal experience coupled with predominantly difficult life circumstances stimulated the continuing development of Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience. This need to develop their spirituality in order to deal with everyday life, by focussing not on the difficulties or themselves but on the horizon of ultimate value, led to initial meetings in homes. As the crowds grew, they moved to school classrooms and then to church fellowship halls, before acquiring building in which to meet.<sup>424</sup> While especially in the latter part of the period male and female Jamaican émigrés migrated to Britain in close to equal proportions,

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<sup>421</sup> Austin-Brooks, *Jamaica Genesis*, 93,102.

<sup>422</sup> MacRobert, 'Black Pentecostalism,' 127.

<sup>423</sup> MacRobert, 'Black Pentecostalism,' 127.

<sup>424</sup> Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theologies*, 55.

women are found in greater proportions in the Pentecostal church, sometimes nine to one.<sup>425</sup>

Women sustained the church's infrastructure, its finance and worship, leading Foster to conclude that "the churches are the women and the women are the churches"; the men lead but the women "run things".<sup>426</sup>

Taylor et al in their study of worship involvement among Caribbean-Blacks in the United States have identified the race issues which are pervasive in the United States, issues which historically have directly impacted African-Americans.<sup>427</sup> This people group (like their British counterparts) were victims of racial prejudice and discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, education and healthcare. The researchers recognised that Caribbean émigrés and African Americans are phenotypically indistinguishable, and therefore would face the same discrimination. One difference being, that Caribbean Blacks had not been socialised into this discriminatory experience.<sup>428</sup> The researchers surmise that Caribbean émigrés occupied a dual position, as immigrants and as persons of African descent. Such encounters require the development of "a new sense of self in relation to the prevailing racial and ethnic hierarchies"; they would have to learn how to be both black and immigrant.<sup>429</sup> This requires strategies of adaptation and an understanding of what it meant to be Caribbean, Black and American, a new socialization experience. The question arises who defines those constructs – the prevailing society, the group themselves or another group?

To my mind this the *Windrush* generation had to be redefined, in the British context. What did it mean to be Black, British and Jamaican? Who was going to teach this lesson? As a result of the 1948 Nationality Act, many of the émigrés already thought/felt they were

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<sup>425</sup> Foster, 'Inverted Pyramid,' 49.

<sup>426</sup> Foster, 'Inverted Triangle,' 55-57.

<sup>427</sup> Robert Taylor et al., 'Religious Involvement among Caribbean Blacks Residing in the United States,' *Review of Religious Research* 52 vol. 2 (2010): 128.

<sup>428</sup> Taylor et al., 'Religious Involvement among Caribbean Blacks,' 128.

<sup>429</sup> Taylor et al., 'Religious Involvement among Caribbean Blacks,' 123.

British. As well as being Black, British and Jamaican, the Pentecostal woman was Pentecostal: she had been transformed through the Spirit, who had given her a new sense of self. For this woman, the development of a worship community was essential, for it was part of her 'language of resistance' but importantly she redefined and defined it. Taylor et al recognised that the worship community

provide[d] the psychological, social, and community space and resources to mould these new identities and insulate Caribbean Black immigrant from prejudice and racism, while simultaneously assisting in the adaptation to a new culture.<sup>430</sup>

While the work of early researchers such as Calley, Hill and Patterson may have pathologised or at the very least presented the Black British Church as deviant, Taylor et al's research suggests that the role of Black Church in the enculturation of the émigrés was both vital and positive, enabling the "maintenance of cultural symbols, practices, and ethnic identities, the development of social networks and cultural ties, and the provision of reference groups and norms for positive self-perceptions".<sup>431</sup> Their study further asserts that worship communities have historically been central to inculcating migrants into their new context. Such religious and worship communities help the migrant in a number of ways. (1) They emphasise the émigrés' identity by serving as a type of 'ethnic repository' where they can retain their identity while adapting to their new context.<sup>432</sup> (2) Worship communities and their attendant rituals help develop and reinforce positive traits such as achievement, hard work and piety.<sup>433</sup> (3) They fulfil important social welfare and social capital functions. (4) They provide an array of social and psychological benefits for immigrants, including the maintenance of

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<sup>430</sup> Taylor et al., 'Religious Involvement among Caribbean Blacks,' 129.

<sup>431</sup> Taylor et al., 'Religious Involvement among Caribbean Blacks,' 128.

<sup>432</sup> Yang Fenggang and Helen Rose Ebaugh, 'Religion and Ethnicity among New Immigrants: The Impact of Majority/Minority Status in Home and Host Countries,' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, no. 3 (September 2001): 367–378.

<sup>433</sup> Robert Taylor et al., 'Religious Involvement among Caribbean Black,' 127.

important cultural symbols and practices, the development of social networks and cultural ties in the countries of origin and destination.

### **3.5.2. The Black Pentecostal Woman's Spirituality**

The BBPW certain aspects of her spirituality in common with other Black Christians. Hers is a spirituality with roots geographically in Africa and spiritually in the self-revelation of the Divine as expressed in primal religion. Such revelation is not human in origin but is a revelation of the 'divine hiddenness' or 'mysteries'.<sup>434</sup> From Africa stems the belief in a High God, 'the creator and sustainer of the universe, provider and healer of the people'.<sup>435</sup> Despite the atrocities of slavery, prejudice and discrimination the BBPW has still managed to encounter Jesus, the one who gives divine power to the believer and who enables her to survive traumas in her life. The Black British Pentecostal woman knows that Jesus understands and knows what it is to be human, but further, he also endured oppression and discrimination, died and was resurrected, thereby thwarting death and evil.<sup>436</sup> However she is distinguished from other Pentecostals in that her expression of Pentecostal was formed in Jamaica.<sup>437</sup> By the time Pentecostal women arrived in Britain, Pentecostalism as transmitted by Americans was barely fifty years in development. Introduced to the island less than thirty years earlier, Pentecostalism had room for further development, a process that within the Jamaican context included indigenization. So in Britain theirs was a Pentecostalism that had emerged from a confluence of the culture of Africa, the oppression of slavery, Revivalism,

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<sup>434</sup> Adedibu, *Coat of Many Colours*, 2012, 19. For more on primal religion see John Taylor, *Primal Vision*, London: SCM Press, 2001.

<sup>435</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 12.

<sup>436</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 14.

<sup>437</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 125

Protestant Christianity and Black Christianity.<sup>438</sup> This was a distinctly Jamaican Pentecostalism, the success of which was due to its combination of aspects of Jamaican folk belief, aspects of African belief systems and Christianity.<sup>439</sup>

Austin-Broos identifies the Holy Spirit as central to the transformation of an individual, it is the presence of the Holy Spirit which initiates transformation.<sup>440</sup> In other words, the action of the Holy Spirit is integral to BBPW's conversion and subsequent development as Pentecostal Christians. Conversion is described as a "moment of transformation, an instantaneous and total reclamation of the human body by the Holy Spirit".<sup>441</sup> Such a transformation is not a result of human intervention but a result of God's intervention. Toulis ascertains from the narratives of women that the interplay of religious experiences *and* actions, such as bereavement, separation or monumental changes such as migration, marriage or childbirth, can lead to conversion.<sup>442</sup> For the BBPW after transformation/conversion simply attending church on a Sunday does not constitute being a Christian. Christian/religious life is a part of everyday life, which includes weekday meetings and services, singing, the commanding voice of Black preachers, direct preaching from the Bible, 'feeling the Spirit', extempore prayer, funeral customs and a pervasiveness of all things spiritual; these all are a part of who she is.<sup>443</sup> She strives to live a morally upright life, i.e. to ensure a daily practice of being holy, and has a set of beliefs and codes which along

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<sup>438</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 69, Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 109

<sup>439</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 109.

<sup>440</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 140.

<sup>441</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 140.

<sup>442</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 67

<sup>443</sup> John Wilkinson uses these descriptions for Jamaican Anglicans a number of whom joined Pentecostal churches on coming to the UK. It is not outside the realms of possibility that these characteristic were part of the make-up of Pentecostal women.

with the Bible directs her actions. For the women of the Church of God that life is partly directed by the denomination's Declaration of Faith (Appendix 1). Toulis comments,

The crucial diacritics of members' faith are: adult full baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; a life of holiness and an ongoing growth in sanctification; the conviction that baptism by the Holy Spirit as described in Acts 2, is as applicable to the contemporary Christians as it was to Christians at the day of Pentecost; that baptism by the Holy Spirit is subsequent to a clean heart; divine healing; and the practice of the 'Lords supper' (communion) and the 'washing of the saints' feet.<sup>444</sup>

### **3.5.3. The Black Pentecostal Woman's Spirituality as Resistance**

The women who came to England from Jamaica had what Valentina Alexander refers to as a 'language of resistance'.<sup>445</sup> They had been a part of and were used to resisting the prevailing culture, whether it be the culture of slavery, colonialism, and class or gender discrimination. Although Alexander does not expound upon this idea to any extent, she maintains that the 'language of resistance' includes a two-fold tactic: first, the implementation of a religious lifestyle which is the result of an appropriation of Christianity with which the women could identify both culturally and experientially, and secondly, the creation of an institution that would meet their needs in a context they developed. It would seem that the language of resistance is as much non-verbal communication as it is verbal. Alexander maintains that all the female émigrés had to do was to adapt the tactics to their new environment.

In furthering Alexander's thought I argue that Pentecostal women had other tools in their arsenal of resistance: the Holy Spirit, relationship with Jesus, a sense of God found in worship, the church community and Scripture and their sense of self. The

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<sup>444</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 125.

<sup>445</sup> Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 89.



‘possession’, i.e. having the Holy Spirit and also the Holy Spirit having the believer, makes a believer a saint, i.e. one who aspires to a sinless life.<sup>446</sup> The Pentecostal women in this study understand, from church teachings that the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s ‘possession’ or ‘infilling’ is speaking in tongues and being equipped to evangelise.<sup>447</sup> For Pentecostal women the relationship with Jesus tends to be spoken of in a more intimate manner than the relationship with the Holy Spirit. Women’s description of their relationship with Jesus generally is also more intimate than male descriptions. Whereas women are more prone to use descriptions such as a ‘bride of Christ’, or ‘friend’, men tend to relate more formally.<sup>448</sup> Males describe a relationship where they ‘praise’, ‘glorify’, ‘give thanks to the Lord’, they ‘walk with their Lord’ and ‘know Him’ as their personal saviour but less often refer to him as ‘friend’.<sup>449</sup>

I consider Christianity in general and Pentecostalism in particular are about a ‘pervasive sense of God as a living force’. The data supports an understanding that within worship there is an ‘experiential rise of the human spirit to meet the descending grace of the Divine’.<sup>450</sup> Further I propose that despite Britain’s foreign and often hostile environment, BBPW could find the spiritual uplift they needed initially in the informal prayer meetings and later in the church community but always in their relationship with God.<sup>451</sup> The relational component is found amongst women more than amongst men – women perhaps needed that

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<sup>446</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 34

<sup>447</sup> Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 84; Peter Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: an Ecumenical Encounter* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2012), 196.

<sup>448</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 151.

<sup>449</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 151.

<sup>450</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 12.

<sup>451</sup> Alexander, ‘Mouse in the Jungle,’ 90

component more than or differently to men.<sup>452</sup> This was possible because ‘church’ was about relationships among people and not buildings or hierarchies; it was to my mind about a near seamless continuity between the sacred and the secular.<sup>453</sup>

Women had Scripture, which is about human relationships and God’s work of liberation depicted through events such as the Exodus, Exile, Cross and Pentecost.<sup>454</sup> Through her reading there is developed a sense of self which is dichotomous whereby she can be both leader and helper. This sense is further influenced by both Pentecostalism and society, both of which she is an integral part and from which has emerged a unique person. This view is supported by Pearl Williams-Jones states of African American Pentecostal women who states:

[s]he is neither bond nor free; yet history and the Holy Ghost have given her position and power beyond the traditional spheres of Blacks and women as minorities. Perhaps in reality she is a “new creature” in Christ Jesus. Whether in positions of leadership or subordinate roles, the Black Pentecostal woman defines her own identity in terms of the needs of time and circumstances.<sup>455</sup>

Both Foster and Alexander agree that Black women were the major contributors to the flourishing of the Black church and for Alexander the major contributor to the historic churches.

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<sup>452</sup> Calley, ‘Pentecostal Sects among West Indian Migrants,’ 60. Calley states in his paper that although he observes equal numbers of men and women in the congregation; more men than women migrated to the UK hence proportionally more women attend the Pentecostal church. He further claimed that the Pentecostalism appeals more to women than to men. 60.; Foster, ‘Women and the Inverted Pyramid,’ 52; Valentina Alexander, ‘A Mouse in a Jungle,’ 90.

<sup>453</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 12.

<sup>454</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 12.

<sup>455</sup> Pearl Williams-Jones, ‘A Minority Report: Black Pentecostal Women,’ *Spirit: A Journal of Issues Incident to Black Pentecostalism* 1, no 2 (1977) 31-44 (42f ) cited in Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theologies*, 172.

### 3.6. Missing! The Black British Pentecostal Woman

I am of the opinion that the female Caribbean émigrés who arrived in England from 1948 and over the subsequent twenty years were to change the landscape of Britain forever. Their contribution came not as the first black migrants, because they weren't as discussed above. This group were different because of their number. Over 125,000 émigrés arrived in Britain between 1946 and 1956 and many then went on to have families. Their phenotype precluded homogenisation with the prevailing human landscape making them easy targets of prejudice, bigotry, discrimination and racism. Black women were easy to see and yet they were invisible – gender blindness? Theologians Robert Beckford, Joe Aldred, Anthony Reddie, and writers Elaine Foster and Valentina Alexander all agree that women play a major role in the Black church.<sup>456</sup> Beckford and Reddie pays attention to womanist perspectives. Aldred acknowledges that his gender has afforded him privileges over females and he “uses his liberation for all God’s people, male and female”.<sup>457</sup> His edited volume *Sisters with Power* with its aim to provide a platform for Black British women, is an example of this effort.<sup>458</sup> In the co-edited book *Black Theology in Britain: A Reader*, Anthony Reddie includes an extended chapter entitled, ‘What the Sistas saying?’ in which the voices of Black British female theologians are afforded a hearing.<sup>459</sup> His book *Black Theology in Transatlantic Dialogue* includes a chapter entitled ‘Bring on the Sistas’, in which he presents a short critical analysis of womanist theology and its resonance with the experience of Black British women. As the editor of *Black Theology: An International Journal*, he states that he strives to ensure

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<sup>456</sup>Robert Beckford, *Jesus is Dread Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998), 156.

<sup>457</sup> Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 199-200; Joe Aldred, *Respect: Understanding Caribbean British Christianity*. (Peterborough: Epworth, 2005), 35.

<sup>458</sup> Aldred, Joe. *Sisters with Power*, (London: Continuum, 2000).

<sup>459</sup> Michael Jagessar and Anthony Reddie, *Black Theology in Britain: A Reader* (London: Equinox, 2007), 109ff; A, Reddie, *Black Theology in Transatlantic Dialogue* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 83-112.

that Black British female theologians are represented in every issue. Many of the Black female writers are scholars, whose perspective and discussion is important, but in my review rarely are the voices of ordinary women represented; the Black British Pentecostal woman is missing. I maintain that her 'language of resistance' was instrumental in the formation of a worship community that helped the early migrants weather a dismal period in crucial ways.<sup>460</sup> This is the theme of the following discussion.

Although Black British Pentecostalism (BBP) caught the attention of sociologists in the 1960s, the role of Black women in general society and in the BBP church in particular has been either understudied and or highlighted only as deviant.<sup>461</sup> Yet BBPW know that they are indispensable to the Black Pentecostal Church, to the Black community and to Britain.<sup>462</sup> Much like the women of the Sanctified Church in Cheryl Townsend Gilkes' *If It Wasn't for the Women*, they have "contributed to the internal strengthening of the [Black] community and its ability to effect ... external transformations".<sup>463</sup> Yet, also similarly, the BBPW's contribution goes unnoticed, with the focus instead more likely to be on features of the gender inequality that exists in the Black church, as shown in Foster's article on the 'Inverted Pyramid' and Alexander's 'Mouse in the Jungle'. Feminist writers attend to the double and triple jeopardies that confront Black women; Black Theologians see them as passive, colluding with the oppressive, exploitative colonial church; and the wider black community

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<sup>460</sup> Alexander, 'Mouse in the Jungle,' 90.

<sup>461</sup> Calley, 'Pentecostal Sects Among West Indian Migrants,' 8.

<sup>462</sup> See Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 85-107; Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid,' 45-68. Toulis, *Believing Identity*.

<sup>463</sup> Gilkes, *If It Wasn't for the Women*, 4; see also Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid of the Black Churches in Britain,' Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 85-107.

ignore their existence and contribution, as I will illustrate below. All seem to ‘have trouble seeing black [Pentecostal] women as effective agents of culture and community’.<sup>464</sup>

Further, my assessment of the literature about Black British women leads me to think Black British Christian women and BBPW are being written out of Black British history. Despite the fact that more than 50 per cent of black women attend a Christian church, they are often missing from academic literature. Bryan et al’s *The Heart of the Race: Black Women’s Lives in Britain*, published over twenty-five years ago, includes a section entitled ‘Religion as a Liberating Force’ which makes reference to Kumina rituals and rites in Jamaica but makes no reference to the importance of Christianity to Black women in today’s Britain.<sup>465</sup> The text reader *Black British Culture and Society* published twelve years ago is deficient in not including even a single excerpt which refers to the place of the church or Christianity in Black British culture and society!<sup>466</sup>

In my assessment radicals and Black Theologians can and do argue that Christianity is a White man’s religion, one that condoned the enslavement, segregation and the oppression of black people in general and women in particular in many parts of the world and is continuing to enslave the minds of many Black Christians.<sup>467</sup> Du Toit – which I view as a response to Black Liberation theologians – states that Christianity was accepted not because

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<sup>464</sup> Alexander, ‘A Mouse in a Jungle,’ 85-107; Townsend Gilkes, *If It Wasn’t for the Women*, 5; Anthony Reddie, ‘Christianity Tu’n Mi Fool: Deconstructing Confessional Black Christian Faith In Postcolonial Britain,’ *Black Theology: An International Journal* 10, no. 1 (2012):49-76: 52.

<sup>465</sup> Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race*, 21. Heidi S. Mirza, *Black British Feminism: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 107. Mirza’s edited volume has one reference to Church in the context of being a place of support.

<sup>466</sup> Kwesi Owusu *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000.

<sup>467</sup> See Anthony Reddie, ‘Christianity Tu’n Mi Fool,’ 52.

of the poverty of the enslaved religion but rather because it could be accepted without much tension.<sup>468</sup> He states that

‘[t]he demise of a certain culture may be interpreted as inherent weakness or may be seen as the precise opposite—that is as a prerequisite for the birth and growth of a new civilization’. This dynamic process of growth, reinterpretation and redefining distinguishes African religious and cultural development but also Christian development. We are all in a process of cultural and religious mutation’.<sup>469</sup>

History and evidence attest that Black women attend church in greater proportion than men and this preponderance should not be ignored. A survey conducted by Tearfund reported that 48 per cent of Britain’s people of ‘black ethnic origin’ attend church regularly, compared to 15 per cent of the white population.<sup>470</sup> The remaining 52 per cent includes not only people who do not go to church at all, but also people who attend church less regularly and people who may be Christians but do not attend church.<sup>471</sup> Based upon this study, Christianity has some relevance to at least half of Britain’s Black population. Is it because it is an organisation comprised of mainly of women that it attracts so little attention from academics?<sup>472</sup> It would seem not. Patrick Kalilombe’s 1997 article *Black Christianity in Britain* did not include attendance statistics but bemoaned the dearth of literature available about Black Christians in Britain.<sup>473</sup> A literature survey indicated that the material and research available were from the

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<sup>468</sup> Cornel W. du Toit, ‘African Spirituality and the Poverty of Western Religious Experience.’ *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* no. 100 (March 1998), 36–60: 37.

<sup>469</sup> du Toit, ‘African Spirituality and the Poverty of Western Religious Experience,’ 37; Starkey, ‘Women Religious and Religious Women,’ 181.

<sup>470</sup> Ashworth, J. and Farthing, I. Church Going in the UK: A Research Report from Tearfund on Church Attendance in the UK. Middlesex: Tearfund, 2007.  
<http://www.tearfund.org/webdocs/Website/News/TAM%20Final%20Version%208.5.07.pdf> [online, accessed 30/12/2010].

<sup>471</sup> Ashworth, J. and Farthing, I. Church Going in the UK.

<sup>472</sup> Gilkes, *If It Wasn’t for the Women*, 85. Gilkes makes reference to sociologists who have studied community organizations and structures who confessed to Gilkes that they often ignored small churches pastored by women precisely because they were pastored by women.

<sup>473</sup> Kalilombe, ‘Black Christianity in Britain,’ 307-308.

fields of either social science or religion. Works in the field of religion were ‘initial essays’ and dealt with the topic of Black Christians in a general manner, including their coming to Britain from the Caribbean and various African countries, the difficulties they faced with integration, and summary descriptions of types, doctrinal positions, beliefs and customs. The social science studies often lacked detailed empirical research about the group or congregation in question and typically the reaction was negative. In the nearly fifteen years since Kalilombe’s article, only a few books and articles have dealt specifically with the Black Church in Britain, the majority of them by Black British liberation theologians.<sup>474</sup> In general more of studies regarding the life of Black people could be conducted, the few that are available largely research matters of health, particularly mental health, and educational underachievement.<sup>475</sup>

The contributions Black British women have made to the development of the Pentecostal church in Jamaica and later in Britain have been documented primarily by social scientists Diane Austin-Broos and Nicole Toulis. Diane Austin-Broos presents a valuable contribution on Pentecostalism’s role in transforming the moral politics of Jamaican women, particularly those who are dark skinned and have children outside of marriage. Her study of Pentecostal women in Jamaica provides an understanding of the spiritual and cultural milieu of the women who would be the trailblazers for the Pentecostal church in Britain. She highlights the transformative influence of the Holy Spirit not only at a religio-cultural level but also at a socio-economic level.

Nicole Toulis’ work focuses on Pentecostalism’s role in mediating Pentecostal ethnic identity and gender. Toulis’ research examines the Black church as a social space that allows for the construction and reconstruction of Black identities with particular regard for the

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<sup>474</sup> See Anthony Reddie and Robert Beckford

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women of one of the churches belonging to New Testament Church of God. Toulis concludes that the Pentecostal church serves to reconstruct Black identity as a counter to the negative images attributed to Black people in British society, an important process in the post-migratory experience of people from the Caribbean in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>476</sup> These works challenge an understanding of the development of BMPCs as a by-product, a consequence of the greater society's rejection, a coping mechanism, or a haven of protection from the ravages of racism and discrimination. Instead they provide a positive construction of an 'ethnic repository' providing space for expression, development and resistance in a new context.

Elaine Foster and Valentina Alexander's work focuses on the émigrés from the *Windrush* generation. Foster's work centres on the experience of inequality and the power wielded by women in the Black Pentecostal church. Alexander's primary focus is Black liberation theology in a British context, with her work centring on the internal politics of the Black church.

The Church of God claims to have over ten thousand members and twenty thousand adherents and forms a microcosm of the Black British Pentecostal church. We know little about 90 per cent of its followers in particular and BBP in general. Kalilombe identifies literature which presents summary descriptions of the types, doctrinal positions, beliefs and customs of Black British Pentecostal churches or of the institution of Pentecostalism. While this information is useful, the Black British Pentecostal church serves a greater purpose for a significant proportion of British society. In terms of spirituality the Black church is the focal point where 'spirituality as a daily experience of participation [is] possible for the majority of [its] people'.<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 48.

<sup>477</sup> Schneiders, 'Religion and Spirituality,' 9.



The remainder of this work seeks to draw upon inductive empirical research and ordinary theology to explicate the features of BBPW's spirituality as lived experience and in so doing attends to some of the gaps in our knowledge of Black British Pentecostalism. Gilkes suggests that the experiences of Black American women make and shape the culture and consciousness of the black religious experience. In keeping with Gilkes' proposal, I suggest in turn that BBPW in the British church shape culture and consciousness, but further, through spirituality as lived experience, they also play an active and assertive role in shaping the spirituality of Black churches.<sup>478</sup> The ordinary theology of BBPW is examined to illuminate the 'lived experience' of BBPW. Listening to BBPW's voices will provide insight into their understanding of spirituality and its nature. Anderson opines that human religiosity and Pentecostal Charismatic experience require holistic comprehension. Any emphasis on 'textuality' that overlooks the significance of experience will not accomplish this holistic understanding. A holistic understanding requires the experiential dimension of spirituality. Pentecostal spiritualities, over and against textuality, should, first, demonstrate an experience of God through the Spirit that is expressed in oral, narrative and participatory liturgies and, second, be pneumatocentric, i.e. recognise the Spirit as central and integral to all of life's experiences.<sup>479</sup>

### **Analysis**

In the historical review above I have deliberately presented a gendered revision. The discounting of the Black male experience is not an indication of its lack of importance nor am I suggesting that the effects of slavery, colonialism, and discrimination was less with respect to Black men. I rather give voice to the experience of women, which is often overlooked or

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<sup>478</sup> Gilkes, *If It Wasn't for the Women*, 10.

<sup>479</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 201.

incorporated within male experience. From her enforced migration to Jamaica and the factors that led to economic migration to the UK, Black women have demonstrated adaptability. This adaptability was noticed by the Spanish and the British 16 and 17 centuries. Whatever distinctive it was it was not common to all as demonstrated among Taino population who through no fault of their own did not survive the reconstruction of their island. Neither was it part of the make-up of many Europeans judging by the early deaths of missionaries and planters. Whether it be a new context, new religion, or role redefinition the ability to adapt I believe was integral to her survival. As already stated women worked as hard as men and were placed in the fields where they worked despite the weather, taking respite, states Walvin six weeks before and three weeks after the birth of the baby.<sup>480</sup> This respite only occurred toward the end of slavery as owners sought to encourage pregnancies. Unlike their male counterparts opportunities for ‘promotion’ were few for women they were not encouraged to become ‘skilled’ workers such as carpenters or overseers. The most they could hope for was to become a domestic servant. Walvin suggests that even though field workers were expected to labour whatever the condition, their life was dictated by the season. In some instances they would break for holidays, this was not the case for the domestic servant.<sup>481</sup> Everything from fetching water, to cleaning, to cooking to throwing out human waste was done by the domestic slave of which women were in greater proportion. Additionally, women were often the target for ‘aggressive sexual approaches’ by local white men. This was particularly the case in Jamaica where domestic female slaves far outweighed the numbers of white women. Some women chose this route having ‘long and durable “marriages”’ with white men, but the forced encounter was more common states Walvin.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Walvin, 108.

<sup>481</sup> Walvin, 115.

<sup>482</sup> Walvin, 116.

This is not the history of White women, which is not to say that White women have not suffered discrimination and oppression but their history has been different. It is difficult for black women to accept that the oppression that feminists are objecting to is in keeping with experience of Black women. This work examines lived experience as spirituality which for Black women includes slavery, racism and discrimination. Jacquelyn Grant defines experience as ‘a complex of events, feelings and struggles which are shared by women in various circumstances of life.’<sup>483</sup> There are different dimensions to these experiences including psychological, emotional, social and religious. In chapter 4 I draw on the work of Professor Sandra Schneiders who acknowledges the place of lived experience in the development of spirituality. In this instance the experience of Black women are placed alongside that of White women, although all experience are to some degree unique Grant goes as far as to say that they are in a ‘different realm’.<sup>484</sup> It may be argued that there are similarities between the British domestic servant and the domestic servant of the plantations but it is clear that there are realms between their experience, the freedom to come and go, not subject to racial prejudice although class prejudice was an issue. Under the law White women had rights not extended Black women. From the above it is clear that slavery and colonialism forms a demarcation. Suffice it to state that during slavery and colonialism although some women who were abolitionists slavery continued for so long because White women were protected, a weaker vessel unlike the black women who was viewed on the same level as livestock.

This has implications in a contemporary context in which black women are under-represented in all facets of aspiring society but over represented in unemployment and semi-skilled workforce and her male children excluded from school. For many black women

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<sup>483</sup> Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1973), 10.

<sup>484</sup> Grant, 195.

central to their survival was belief in the Supreme Being/God/Jesus. That despite the injustices meted out by the slavery and colonialism their spirituality which consisted of a meetings, preaching and songs undergirded their relationship with God which had developed out of and inspite of their experience. For these women the religion they had brought with them from Africa was a way of life one that gave meaning to life. It was a religion that helped them make sense of their context. The world did not consist of people and things within but was in the words of Leonard Barret 'an arena permeated by a divine force'.<sup>485</sup> The God of the Akan, who were the main people group that were transported to Jamaica- was not a domestic deity but was omnipresent – God was everywhere.

Adaptability, however does not equal conformity, we can surmise that the women still had a strong sense of self, which is displayed in their rendering of the Bible. Importantly these women had to make sense of their experience. The made sense of the experience of slavery and colonialism but also hurricanes, recession, war, the Walter Curran Act and the migration of men and women more specifically fathers, mothers and children. Through these circumstances the women are resilient, longsuffering, creative and entrepreneurial. The image presented by others was not the image they had of themselves. They did not conform to nor internalise the prevailing slave or colonial view. Their ingenuity, adaptability and will to survive, adjust and not conform is a testament to their strength and perhaps to their spirituality. Being between the ages of sixteen and thirty these women had been the carriers of the values and teaching of their people for hundreds of years. We can surmise that the women who managed to survive the transatlantic crossing would have been the strongest physically, mentally and emotionally.

The place of community is key to this discussion, as stated above one of the roles women assumed was that of keeping the family/community together. Gilkes makes the point

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<sup>485</sup> Barrett, 'African Roots in Jamaican Indigenous Religions,' 10.

that white feminists are confused when African American women chose a Black male political candidate over a white female. There is, she states, a loyalty that is extended due to the impact of prejudice and discrimination. The community of women is something that should be considered here. In Jamaica where men could leave at any time forcibly, because of migration or because of domestic breakup the role of other women particularly those who may have a shared experience is cathartic. One of the motivations for this work emerged from the women in the church I attended as a child and the conversations which took place within spaces which are thought of pejoratively by some feminists because the space is not the pulpit or the board room where it is held that the power lies. However the kitchen space, the Pentecostal service is a space essentially carved out by women, over which they have a large measure of control. In the kitchen they could control who could come in, who received large portions of food and those who would get a normal portion. By far the community that took place in the kitchen was among women, it was a space where they could share struggles and stories what Marla Fredrick calls it 'haven of sharing'.<sup>486</sup> However this can seem to be a romantic view of domestic sphere there are those such as Ellen Moros in her work the *Politics of Housework* who present the kitchen as an isolated politically constructed space where housewives are bored and whose femininity is neutralized.

### 3.7. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the Black British Pentecostal woman. She is a product of her experience, which includes her history and her faith. This chapter traced the religious and spiritual development of the country, Jamaica, which was to become hers due to her forcible removal from Africa. In Jamaica she inhabited a context which testified to

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<sup>486</sup> Marla Frederick, *Between the Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 34. EBSCOhost eBook Collection [accessed June 30 2014],

expendability of non-white lives. She brought with her a 'soulforce' which formed the basis upon which Christianity and Pentecostalism were to build and develop. The Christian expression of Pentecostalism which developed was a form of resistance to the prevailing colonial and historic Christian culture, an expression which she utilised and further developed in the British context. The following chapter explores the development of the spirituality that is associated with BBPW and is the focus of this research.

## Chapter 4

### **Spirituality: As Academic Discourse**

The previous chapter provided an historical, cultural and religious survey of the women at the centre of this study. The present chapter and the next are concerned with the other half of the project's focus, namely spirituality. This chapter examines the development of spirituality more generally, while the chapter 5 presents a construct of Pentecostal spirituality from the history and perspective of BBPW. These analyses provide a context within which an understanding of spirituality as lived experience is developed and from which an understanding of Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience finds support.

The chapter opens with a historical overview of contemporary spirituality emerging from a Judeo-Christian scriptural foundation. Over time spirituality became associated with ecclesial designation before becoming personally situated. The historical overview is followed by a discussion which presents spirituality in a contemporary context. Within this context, spirituality has such a broad application that it affects almost every aspect of life, including academic research. As examined in the following discussion, spirituality has become of academic interest to non-religious disciplines such as nursing and geography as well as the fields of religion and Christianity. The discussions of Catholic theologian Sandra Schneiders and her work in the area of spirituality is examined. This includes a consideration of the approaches to the study of Spirituality, which she suggests.

#### **4.1. A Historical Overview of the Development of a Contemporary Understanding of Spirituality**

Alister McGrath appropriates the translation of the Hebrew *ruach* as 'spirit' on which to base his definition of Christian spirituality. Whilst acknowledging that *ruach* has a range of

meanings, he focuses on its inference as ‘wind’ and ‘breath’. The notion of breath, denoting life and spirituality, is considered by some to be the life of faith, i.e. that which “drives and motivates it [faith] and what people find helpful in sustaining and developing it [faith]; that which animates the life of the believer”.<sup>487</sup> John Barton takes a more praxis-orientated approach to the contribution of the Old Testament to spirituality, presenting it as evidence of spirituality in both the Jewish and Christian religious heritage. For Jews and Christians, however, the Old Testament is more than source material, for as a document of the believing community, it has both spiritual and religious significance.<sup>488</sup>

Glen Scorgie begins his exploration in the New Testament with Paul’s use of the term *pneumatikoi*, which describes those who are in step with the pneuma (Spirit of God).<sup>489</sup> Scorgie states that this canonical point is instructive because of its subsequent permutations, but it also indicates that integral to any spirituality-talk, particularly in terms of Christian spirituality, should be the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is always *Spirit-uality*.<sup>490</sup> Similarly, Sandra Schneiders asserts that a preconciliar understanding of the adjectival form ‘spiritual’ as expressed by the Apostle Paul describes any reality (charisms, blessings, hymns, etc.) that was under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul utilises the term in 1 Cor. 2:14–15 to distinguish the ‘spiritual person’ (*pneumatikos*) from the ‘natural person’ (*psychikos anthrōpos*).<sup>491</sup> This theological distinction governed the use of the term ‘spirit’ and its derivative ‘spirituality’ through the patristic period into the twelfth century, when the term

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<sup>487</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 2.

<sup>488</sup> John Barton, ‘The Old Testament,’ in *Study of Spirituality*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward S Yarnold (Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press, USA, 1986), 48-49.

<sup>489</sup> Glen G Scorgie, ‘Overview of Christian Spirituality,’ in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* ed. Glen Scorgie, Simon Chan, Gordon Smith and James Smith (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 27; *pneumatikoi* literally means spiritual persons.

<sup>490</sup> Scorgie, ‘Overview of Christian Spirituality,’ 28.

<sup>491</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 20.



acquired a more philosophical implication in that ‘spiritual’ came to be understood as the antithesis of material or corporeal.<sup>492</sup>

During the thirteenth century this distinction continued but with a ‘juridical’ nuance which distinguished the ecclesiastical from the secular, whether in terms of property or power.<sup>493</sup> In the seventeenth century ‘spiritual’ described the interior life of the Christian, particularly the affective dimension. Interior life differed from devotion, which was thought to place proper emphasis on sobriety and human effort.<sup>494</sup> Over time the affections became associated with “questionable enthusiasm or even heretical forms of spiritual practice (such as quietism)”, and such experience/behaviour had negative connotations.<sup>495</sup> While classical (Roman Catholic) mysticism had been relegated by some to ‘enthusiasm’, many Christians were borrowing from the new cultural emphases on reason, tolerance, harmony, order, providence and morality in order to understand and reconceptualise their experience of God.<sup>496</sup> What developed was a spirituality that reflected the temper of the time, a Janus-like era, a time of looking back and incorporating the devotional forms of the past, i.e. classical mysticism and devotional practices, whilst at the same time reaching forward.

An example of this mode of spirituality is found in the works of Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Motte Guyon (1648–1717). Her autobiography depicts a “soul seeking God within an unprecedented psychological transparency”. The self had become a space for God to speak. She was writing in an era in which scripture was no longer the only authority, for it

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<sup>492</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 20.

<sup>493</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 20.

<sup>494</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 20.

<sup>495</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 20.

<sup>496</sup> Diana Butler Bass and Joseph Steward Sicking, ‘Christian Spirituality in Europe and North America since 1700,’ in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed. Arthur Holder (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 142.

had been subdued by scholastic doctrine and mechanistic natural science. However Guyon popularised a tradition that was at odds with Cartesian philosophy and Enlightenment thought, “this tradition was marked by a belief in the complete reliability of knowledge derived from the non-rational experience of inner spirituality”.<sup>497</sup> Much of Guyon’s spirituality was based on her development of the Roman Catholic doctrine of *apatheia* or indifference, a development that was controversial. Guyon believed in the inability of humans to apprehend God, and she distrusted human desires, believing relationship with God was a result of grace. The most that humans could do was to be open to the divine action of God.<sup>498</sup> Although Guyon was imprisoned for seven years after the publication of *The Short and Easy Method of Prayer* in 1685 and her writing banned, her beliefs would influence Roman Catholic spirituality for the next three centuries and would have a much wider appeal among Protestants, particularly those of the Wesleyan tradition.<sup>499</sup>

By the eighteenth century ‘spiritual’ was used of those people who aspired to a life of perfection as distinct from an ‘ordinary life of faith’. Aspirants would need guidance in their quest, a spiritual director; he or she played a lead role in the process of the aspirant achieving perfection. By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries “spirituality as the practice of the interior life by those aspiring to the life of perfection was firmly established”.<sup>500</sup>

From the seventeenth century to the mid twentieth century, spiritual theology was understood as the theoretical study of the ‘life of perfection’, the interior life of persons, monks, nuns and mystics who sought to live the Christian calling more intensely than ‘ordinary Christians’.<sup>501</sup> By the mid twentieth century this classical theological sub-discipline

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<sup>497</sup> Patricia A. Ward, ‘Madame Guyon and Experiential Theology in America,’ *Church History* 67, no. 3 (September 1998), 484-498:485.

<sup>498</sup> Butler Bass and Steward Sicking, ‘Christian Spirituality in Europe and North America,’ 142.

<sup>499</sup> Ward, ‘Madame Guyon and Experiential Theology in America,’ 484-485.

<sup>500</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 21.

<sup>501</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 23.

was questioned not only by Protestants but also by Catholics. The primary objection was that its over-systemisation led to a fragmented spiritual life rather than one that is organic and developmental.<sup>502</sup> Additionally, emphasis was on the ‘extraordinary’ Christian, it paid no concern to the ‘ordinary’ Christian who presumably was not seeking ‘perfection’.

Vatican II reaffirmed the call to one and the same holiness and by this time classical spiritual theology had given way to the more popular ‘spirituality’. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), a theologian who dabbled in science, believed that reason could be employed to know about God and the universe; however for Edwards it was the affections that enabled humans to know God.<sup>503</sup> John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, and George Whitefield were to develop Edwards’ insights through a trans-continental revival movement which emphasised the emotive aspects of faith through the experiential experience of being ‘born again’.<sup>504</sup> They developed a spirituality that was seated in the heart – rather than in the head – which greatly influenced the future of Anglo-American evangelical Protestantism. In the wake of Vatican II Protestants who preferred terms such as ‘piety’, ‘devotion’, and perfection when speaking about the interior life not only learned the Roman Catholic meaning of the terms but also contributed from their own Protestant traditions to Roman Catholic thought and practice.<sup>505</sup> Although similar practices are demonstrated in other religions and faiths, this understanding of spirituality stems from Christian, primarily Roman Catholic roots.

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<sup>502</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 23.

<sup>503</sup> Butler, Bass and Sicking, ‘Christian Spirituality in Europe and North America since 1700,’ 143.

<sup>504</sup> Butler, Bass and Sicking, ‘Christian Spirituality in Europe and North America since 1700,’ 143.

<sup>505</sup> Sandra Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals or Partners,’ *Horizons* 13, no. 2 (1986), 255.

## 4.2. The Place of Spirituality in the Lives of Black Women

Recent years have seen increased academic and popular interest in spirituality. That interest has included studies researching the spirituality of Black women particularly in the United States. Anne Squire provides three reasons why the exploration of women's spirituality – as opposed to spirituality in general – is necessary. First, although there are experiences which men and women have in common, some experiences are unique to women, pregnancy and childbirth being two.<sup>506</sup> Second, attitudes towards women and their experiences, over and against attitudes to men are dissimilar; and finally, the words and symbols in the spiritual quest carry different meanings to women.

I agree with Squires female experience should be explored as such. Ordinary experiences such as menstruation and for many childbirth have traditionally excluded women from ecclesial practice. Stemming from Pentateuchal and Jewish traditions, not only the experiences have been branded unclean but the perception of experiences as unclean has extended to women's person. Jesus's interaction with women and those considered unclean such as lepers helped I believe the early Pentecostal church to accept Paul's teaching of '[i]n Christ there is neither male or female' however further exploration would not only help to 'cleanse' women of perceptions but would also bring balance to the current understanding of spirituality which is predominantly through a male lens of male experience.

Attitudes toward women's experience need to be challenged and revisioned. To my mind part of the problem lies with males in the church who are aware of whose power and contribution has led to the establishment of the church, a power that is invisible and yet women know their know their power and Gilkes reminds us that they find ways assert their importance mainly in spaces they have created.

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<sup>506</sup> Anne Squire, 'Women and Spirituality,' *Religious Education* 73, no 3 (My-Je 1978), 324-335: 326-327.

In relation to African-Americans, Gilkes accuses the academy who have researched 'the history and social life of black people armed with presumptions of mainstream science, or these women's visibility has been overlooked as unimportant to the larger questions governing the research'.<sup>507</sup> Gilkes goes further on this point stating that White sociologists have confessed to her they 'saw' women in the context of community organisations but assumed they were unimportant. In the case of women who pastored 'store front churches' they were presumed by the sociologists to be marginal sects of equal unimportance. Anderson has accepted that the presence of women to the spread of Pentecostalism was significant and states that historians are now revisioning history to include the contribution of women. However I argue that this has to also include women's experience as female experience as it is possible to tell someone story without locating it within their experience as a female. Some of the women in my research saw their role as important but viewed themselves as the engine, the unseen propulsion of the organisation. I stated that the problem lies with men but also with women who although they are aware of their power are for the most part contented to be unseen, others have been so socialised that they believe as women they should remain silent and some take the statement of this literally when it comes to challenging the status quo.

Corliss Heath maintains that Black women's spirituality focuses on 'interpersonal relationships along with valuing personal experiences, establishing community, as well as respect for nature'.<sup>508</sup> Spirituality is not peripheral to the Black woman's life but is central to her reflection and practice. This stance is supported by research which suggests that spiritual

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<sup>507</sup> Gilkes, *If it wasn't for the Women*, 8.

<sup>508</sup> Corliss D Heath, 'A Womanist Approach to Understanding and Assessing the Relationship between Spirituality and Mental Health,' *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 9, no. 2 (2006), 155-170:160, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 9, 2013).

and religious belief influence most spheres of African-American life, sustaining and aiding in 'the survival and liberation efforts of the black community'.<sup>509</sup> In her study of African-American women's definitions of spirituality and religiosity, Jacqueline Mattis concluded that despite the synonymous use of the terms by social science researchers, non-academics make important distinctions between the two.<sup>510</sup>

Mattis advises researchers that the recognition of the distinct meaning that the terms have for the study participants is crucial, as overlooking these important distinctions could render any findings questionable.<sup>511</sup> Mattis found that other distinctions are made not only between spirituality and religiosity but also between spirits in the religious realm, e.g. God, and spirits in the secular realm, e.g. ancestors.<sup>512</sup> Using qualitative research methodology, Mattis explores the meaning of spirituality and religiosity and concludes that among the participants the meanings are intertwined, though with distinguishing factors. Principally, religiosity is understood as

[O]ne's adherence to prescribed rituals and beliefs about God (or a set of gods). Whereas religiousness may involve participation in prescribed rituals, spirituality is defined as the internalisation of, and the genuine and consistent commitment to, particular beliefs and values (e.g. quest for goodness). [S]pirituality is defined as an intimate relationship between God, the individual and others. Spirituality also denotes a journey of self-reflection, self-criticism, and self-awareness that culminates in a greater understanding of the relationship between self, God and the larger community (including the ancestors). Finally, many interviewees insist that religion and church life provide an entree into the experience of spirituality.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>509</sup> Heath, 'A Womanist Approach to Understanding and Assessing,' 160.

<sup>510</sup> Jacqueline Mattis, 'African American Women's Definitions of Spirituality and Religiosity,' *Journal of Black Psychology* 26, no 1 (February 2000), 101-122: 101.

<sup>511</sup> Mattis, 'African American Women's Definitions,' 118; Linda Chatters et al, 'Spirituality and Subjective Religiosity among African Americans, Caribbean Blacks, and non-Hispanic whites,' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 4 (2008), 725-737: 727-728.

<sup>512</sup> Mattis, 'African American Women's Definitions,' 102.

<sup>513</sup> Mattis, 'African American Women's Definitions,' 118.

Although the Mattis found consistency between her findings and a similar study conducted among a group of white males, religion still appears to be more important in the lives of African-American women, supporting Heath's assertion above. One reason lies in the socialization of women in church at an earlier age. As a result they may score higher on religious salience indicators than their male counterparts.<sup>514</sup> In Matthis' study, spirituality for women of colour tends to be Christian spirituality, while for women of other ethnic groups institutionalised religion is a barrier to spirituality.<sup>515</sup> Musgrove *et al* in their qualitative work with women of colour found that spirituality is equated with religious practice such as church attendance, Bible study and prayer. Spirituality is not abstract but rooted in relationships and in community.<sup>516</sup> Musgrove *et al* call for more research into other faith traditions, secular spirituality and also present-day Christian practice.<sup>517</sup>

No comparative studies have been carried out among Black Pentecostal women in Britain, but conclusions can be drawn from the Tearfund survey which found that 48 per cent of Black adults attend church, as opposed to 15 per cent of the White population and that, additionally, the greater proportion of both groups is female.<sup>518</sup> We can conclude that Christian spirituality and/or religiosity are important to nearly 50 per cent of the Black population of Great Britain.

The previous discussion considered research conducted among African Americans, which conclude that spirituality is central in the lives of African-American women. Despite the absence of similar work among BBPW, the Tearfund survey conducted regarding British

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<sup>514</sup> Catherine Musgrave, Carol Easley Allen and Gregory Allen, 'Spirituality and Health for Women of Color,' *American Journal of Public Health* 92, no. 4 (April 2002), 557.

<sup>515</sup> Musgrave, Allen and Allen, 'Spirituality and Health for Women of Color,' 557.

<sup>516</sup> Musgrove, Allen and Allen, *Spirituality and Health*, 557.

<sup>517</sup> Musgrove, Allen and Allen, *Spirituality and Health*, 557.

<sup>518</sup> J. Ashworth and I. Farthing, *Church going in the UK: A research report from Tearfund on church attendance in the UK*. Middlesex: Tearfund, 2007.

church attendance suggests the same maybe true among BBPW. The following discussion explores theological definitions of Christian spirituality, in particular those informed by the thinking of Sandra Schneiders.

### **4.3. Defining Christian Spirituality**

There is currently no overarching or generally agreed upon theological or popular definition of spirituality or of Christian spirituality. In chapter one ‘spirituality’ was used to refer to a number of practices including ‘Bible reading’, the ‘prescribed practices of the church’ and ‘life experience’. It was further suggested that spirituality was all of these things and more. Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience was proposed as a sensitizing concept, a label for the subject under discussion. In Mattis’ work, referenced in the last section, in response to a sociological study African-American female participants spoke of the centrality of spirituality in their lives.<sup>519</sup> The participants defined spirituality as an intimate relationship between God, the individual and others, as well as a journey of self-reflection, self-criticism and self-awareness which leads to an understanding of self, God and others.

Jon Alexander surveyed definitions of spirituality and concludes that for the most part spirituality is used in an experiential and generic sense, i.e. one that is consonant with an anthropological rather than dogmatic approach that is one denoting an experiential reality.<sup>520</sup> Such realities can be characterised by Christianity and other religions but can also be predicated on non-religious and even anti-religious phenomena such as secular feminism or Marxism.<sup>521</sup> An anthropological approach conveys spirituality’s contemporary use primarily

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<sup>519</sup> Mattis, ‘African American Women’s Definitions,’ 101-122.

<sup>520</sup> Jon Alexander, ‘What Do Recent Writers Mean by Spirituality,’ *Spirituality Today* 32, no. 3 (1980), 247-256; 254; Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 22.

<sup>521</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 21.



borne out of an emphasis on the self, and demonstrated in particular in the emphasis on self-development, a more ‘differentiated understanding of human psychology’, a ‘universal code for direction and meaning’ and the rediscovery of spirituality as a lost or at least hidden dimension in a largely materialistic world.<sup>522</sup>

The advantage of such a widely understood use of the term lies in the capacity for free communication between individuals, denominations and faith groups.<sup>523</sup> A disadvantage is in the reality of its seemingly all-encompassing application, causing the term to become vague and indistinct, which in turn renders its use as a definition challenging.<sup>524</sup> However, Schneiders comments that the development of language cannot be controlled by fiat, and with this condition in mind, she offers a definition, which is explored below. Her definition acknowledges spirituality is understood variously and as such is intentionally broad, in order to include both religious and non-religious spiritualities. Although the diverse nature of the definition is acknowledged, any Christian definition should be more specific. The worldview of the women in this study would hold true with Schneiders view that a Christian definition of spirituality should be ‘bordered’ by key concepts which include belief in the triune God, commitment to a life of love and justice as directed by the gospel and a life of self-transcendence.

Arthur Holder contends that in the case of Christian spirituality much of the divergence lies in where the emphasis is placed; if emphasis is placed on *Christianity* as a concrete phenomenon the resulting question is, what within Christianity can be identified as

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<sup>522</sup> Ursula King, ‘Spirituality,’ *A New Dictionary of Religions*, ed. John R. Hinnells, Blackwell Publishing, 1995. Blackwell Reference Online. [accessed 21 February 2011] [http://0-www.blackwellreference.com.library.regent.edu/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631181392\\_chunk\\_g978063118139220\\_ss1-153](http://0-www.blackwellreference.com.library.regent.edu/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631181392_chunk_g978063118139220_ss1-153)

<sup>523</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 22.

<sup>524</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 22.

‘spirituality’ as distinct from ethics or doctrine? Or could it be a ‘conjoining’ of such elements, asks Holder.<sup>525</sup> Such an emphasis can designate Christian spirituality as an area of specialization within the broad field of Christian studies or within the narrower field of church history or biblical studies.<sup>526</sup> Alternatively if the emphasis is on *spirituality*, particularly spirituality as an existential characteristic, then questions are raised regarding how Christianity specifies and thematises this universal characteristic.<sup>527</sup>

Eire tackles these issues by evaluating a number of definitions of spirituality. Raymundo Panikkar’s definition states that spirituality is “one typical way of handling the human condition”; Eire questions Panikkar’s definition and rhetorically questions if this is not the object of all human behaviour that is to handle the human condition? Eire continues, if spirituality is ‘one typical way of handling the human condition’, what distinguishes spirituality from any other type of human behaviour? Is spirituality to be considered as any and every attempt to cope with life? Eire further explicates this point by examining various other definitions and concludes that the definition offered by Schneiders is useful because it has ‘lucid boundaries’.<sup>528</sup>

Schneiders defines spirituality as *the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the horizon of ultimate value one perceives*.<sup>529</sup> Self-transcendence is the substantial gift of the Holy Spirit, who establishes

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<sup>525</sup> Arthur Holder, ‘Introduction,’ in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed. Arthur Holder (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 3.

<sup>526</sup> Holder, ‘Introduction,’ 3.

<sup>527</sup> Holder, ‘Introduction,’ 5.

<sup>528</sup> Carlos M. N. Eire, ‘Major Problems in the Definition of Spirituality as an Academic Discipline,’ in *Modern Christian Spirituality: Methodological and Historical Essays*, ed. Bradley Hanson (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990), 54.

<sup>529</sup> Sandra M. Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?’ *Horizons* 13, (1986) 253-274: 266 -267

a life giving relationship with God in Christ within a believing community. As such Christian spirituality is a Trinitarian, Christological and ecclesial religious experience.<sup>530</sup> This broad definition is qualified by Schneiders denoting spirituality as specifically Christian when the ultimate value one perceives is the 'triune God as revealed in Jesus Christ to whom scripture normatively witnesses and whose life is communicated to the believer making her or him a child of God'.<sup>531</sup> Christian Spirituality, then, is a 'Christian religious experience' for such particular theological considerations are integral to the experience. The experience should be 'affective, cognitive, social, personal, God centred and other directed all at the same time'.<sup>532</sup>

Marla Frederick is in accord, stating that spirituality is a process of engagement with God with an outcome which informs the thoughts, motivations and actions of individuals.<sup>533</sup> She is careful to note, however, that for the women in her study, religiosity and spirituality were distinct, religion being linked to structure and repetitive ritual practices, and spirituality to on-going maturation. Fredericks' participants developed depths of spirituality over time and in relationship to the circumstances of their lives.

Such an understanding of spirituality provides the content for the study of spirituality as experience, in that Pentecostal spirituality is not the study of Christian faith per se but the *lived experience* of the Christian faith. How that faith expresses itself in the everyday lives of the women determines *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience*. Schneiders notes that spirituality as the lived experience of Christian faith is not limited to explicitly religious experience. Other dimensions of humanity include the psychological, political, and social, these contribute to and are integral parts of experience. All experiences are possibly

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<sup>530</sup> Schneiders, 'Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?' 266.

<sup>531</sup> Schneiders, 'Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,' 16, 17.

<sup>532</sup> Schneiders, 'Theology and Spirituality,' 267.

<sup>533</sup> Frederick, *Between the Sundays*, 14.

pertinent; none are peripheral.<sup>534</sup> Spirituality is not static and closed but is a process that ebbs and flows with the development of individuals.<sup>535</sup>

Schneiders argues that an experience counts as ‘spirituality’, when that experience satisfies four criteria. First, the experience should not be spontaneous nor a collection of experiences and or episodes; rather it should be a deliberate, conscious and consistent way of living. Second, the experience is not self-enclosed but orients the subject beyond purely private satisfaction towards the ultimate good, the highest value, that the person recognises, which in this case is God. Third, the ultimate value functions as a goal, encouraging the person towards growth, and therefore the spiritual life is intrinsically dynamic. Finally, spirituality as a lived experience does not include addictions (no matter how all-consuming they might be). Exploitative or aggressive projects that are purely self-serving or at the expense of others or creation, or ‘venal concerns with money, power, or pleasure’ are also negated.<sup>536</sup> The horizon of ultimate value for the Christian is the ‘triune God as revealed in Jesus Christ to whom scripture normatively witnesses and whose life is communicated to the believer making her or him a child of God’<sup>537</sup>

Schneiders’ definition states that “spirituality [refers] to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one’s life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives”.<sup>538</sup> This definition is not specific to Christian spirituality but is intentionally broad to encompass religious, non-religious and anti-religious spiritualities.<sup>539</sup> While we will expand on this definition below, a short explanation

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<sup>534</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 33

<sup>535</sup> Frederick, *Between the Sundays*, 14

<sup>536</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 17.

<sup>537</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 17.

<sup>538</sup> Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality,’ 266-267.

<sup>539</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 17.

of how Schneiders arrived at her definition is useful. Schneiders identified and explicated the common characteristics of spirituality definitions generally used by scholars in the field. Specifically these characteristics cover ‘progressive, consciously pursued, personal integration through self-transcendence within and toward the horizon of ultimate concern’.<sup>540</sup> By extrapolating these commonalities, Schneiders arrived at the conclusion that scholars adopt one of two basic approaches to the definition and hence to the subject matter; they took either a ‘dogmatic approach’ or an ‘anthropological approach’. The dogmatic approach advocates that spirituality stems from grace and as such constitutes a ‘definition from above’. Schneiders specifies that any experience that is not explicitly Christian can only be called spirituality by extension or comparison. By this approach humans ‘supply the conditions for the reception of grace’. If the ultimate concern is named as ‘God [as] revealed in Jesus Christ and experienced through the gift of the Holy Spirit within the life of the church’, this is then a Christian spirituality.<sup>541</sup> Conversely definitions that develop from an ‘anthropological approach’ are ‘definition[s] from below’ and have as their focus the individual. Such an approach advocates that spiritual life emerges from the human person.<sup>542</sup> Spirituality in this case is an activity of human life, and as such is open to engagement with the Absolute. Engagement with the Absolute would render the spirituality religious and if that absolute is Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit then the spirituality would be Christian, but spirituality that belongs to this category is not limited only to such an engagement.<sup>543</sup> Schneiders contends that in principle every person can engage if she or he is seeking to live an authentically human life.<sup>544</sup>

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<sup>540</sup> Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality,’ 266.

<sup>541</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 22

<sup>542</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 21.

<sup>543</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 22.

<sup>544</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 22.

Walter Principé was one of the first scholars to reflect systematically on the meaning of spirituality and essentially identified three different but related ways that spirituality can be understood: first, at the real or existential level of lived experience which consists of the attitudes, dispositions and practices of Christians as they live life daily; second, as the spiritual doctrines and practices of significant groups or different spiritual traditions; or finally as a discipline or [area of] study, a more formal reflection on practice.<sup>545</sup>

The current project attends to Principé's first way of understanding, that of spirituality as *lived experience*, in that it seeks to apprehend, and enter the consciousness of female Pentecostals as they share their experience of faith.<sup>546</sup> The participants in this research are Pentecostal and the main discourse partner is Pentecostal and Charismatic studies.

#### **4.4. The Resurgence of Contemporary Interest in Spirituality**

Principé's taxonomy, outlined above, is helpful in that it highlights the reality that the single designation 'spirituality' can be understood in (at least) three ways. (This chapter pays particular attention to one of these ways.) This broad application of the term began in the twentieth century as spirituality began to lose its exclusively Christian associations. Although our current understanding of spirituality has its roots in Western Christianity, the term accommodates and encompasses the 'diversity and complexity' of Christian, non-Christian and non-religious expressions.<sup>547</sup> Additionally, the popularity of what has been described as

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<sup>545</sup> Walter Principe, 'Pluralism in Christian Spirituality,' *The Way* 32, no. 1 (1992): 54 -61; Elizabeth Dreyer, preface to *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality* Elizabeth Dreyer and Mark Burrow eds. (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), xv.

<sup>546</sup> Glen Scorgie, 'Review Essay of Four Views of Christian Spirituality,' *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 6, no. 2 (2013): 294.

<sup>547</sup> Ursula King, *The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life* (BlueBridge: New York, 2008), 3.

‘belief in an authentic, tangible spiritual reality’, but not necessarily in a Creator, has led to further fluidity in the term’s application, and consequently to further confusion about its meaning.<sup>548</sup> Such expansive use has attracted both popular and academic attention and has contributed to the production of a vast amount of literature about or related to spirituality. A discussion of the factors that have led to the development of this fluidity provides a rationale for focusing on spirituality as experience, and it is to these factors that this chapter now turns.

Without negating the reasons presented above, further explanations have been offered for the increased interest in spirituality in general and in personal spirituality in particular. Roman Catholic spirituality, suggests Ursula King, the tradition from which current Christian spirituality emerged, is imitative, static and anchored in the past. As such it has “fail[ed] to capture the dynamic, transformative quality of spirituality as lived experience, as the great adventure of the human mind and soul in seeking its own transcendence by crossing boundaries of emotion, intellect and imagination”.<sup>549</sup> One of the consequences has been the decline in the appeal of institutionalised religion. Holmes supports this point, writing:

the apparent failure of Western Christianity has been its study as a metaphysical, sterile, historic phenomenon, rather than as personally relevant, salugenic or positively transformative. ‘Salugenic’ refers to the sense of wholeness that induces healthy living as opposed to sickness (pathogenic).<sup>550</sup>

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<sup>548</sup> Eire, ‘Major Problems,’ 53; Peter R Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,’ in *A Sociology of Spirituality*, ed Kieran Flanagan and Peter Jupp (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 23; Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy,’ 15.

<sup>549</sup> King, ‘Spirituality,’ in *A New Handbook of Living Religions*, ed. John R Hinnells (Blackwell Publishing, 1996). Blackwell Reference Online. Accessed 22 February 2011 [http://0-www.blackwellreference.com.library.regent.edu/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9780631182757\\_chunk\\_g978063118275720](http://0-www.blackwellreference.com.library.regent.edu/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9780631182757_chunk_g978063118275720) see under Contemporary Perspectives on Spirituality; Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives’ in *A Sociology of Spirituality*, ed. Kieran Flanagan and Peter Jupp (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 25; David Perin, *The Study of Spirituality* (New York: Routledge, 2007) ebook collection EBSCOhost (accessed July 16, 2014) p19, Perin defines self-transcendence as the human capacity to intimate and or meaningful relationships with other humans and or realities.

<sup>550</sup> Peter R. Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,’ 26.

Other explanations include growing cynicism towards the value of material possessions along with evidence supporting the therapeutic effect of personal spirituality on the quality of life. Finally and more specifically related to the British context, spirituality is included in the language of compulsory education, and as such its “meaning has been adapted to make it acceptable to religious and non-religious groups”.<sup>551</sup> In essence,

People struggling to get their footing in a vertiginous culture desperately grab onto whatever looks like it will provide some stability, some guidance, some map for directing them to a moment of silence among the sound bites as they turn round on the carousel of achievement hoping to get some brass ring.<sup>552</sup>

However while the variety and diversity that exist in the contemporary understanding and use of spirituality have given cause for hope, Michael Downey finds a cause for concern in that while prayer and devotion are described as spirituality, so too are occult practices, advertisements on television which offer ‘feel good’ spirituality, and secular retreats which promote personal wellness. The assumption is that while religion may be helpful, it is no longer a prerequisite for spiritual life.<sup>553</sup> Peter Holmes affirms this position, stating that while there is now ‘belief in an authentic, tangible spiritual reality’, that belief and its associated belief system can occur without regard for the Christian faith, or, indeed for any faith – what Schneiders refers to as ‘decontextualized spirituality’.<sup>554</sup> King urges caution regarding the separation of spirituality and religion, stating,

When people separate religion and spirituality sharply from each other or even oppose them, religion is then often ... identified with external institutional aspects, while spirituality is reduced to something internal, a personal

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<sup>551</sup> McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 1; Ellen T. Charry, ‘Christian Spirituality: Whither?’ *Theology Today* 56, no. 1 (April 1, 1999): 1-4. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 10, 2013), 1; Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,’ 24; William Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2000), 334.

<sup>552</sup> Charry, ‘Christian Spirituality: Whither?’ 1.

<sup>553</sup> Michael Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>554</sup> Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,’ 23; Sandra Schneiders, ‘Spirituality and the God Question,’ *Spiritus* 10, no .2 (2010), 243-250: 246.



inwardness that has little bearing on social and institutional life. Yet on closer examination it would seem that this represents an impoverished view of religion and spirituality, a loss of vision and non-recognition of the essential energy resources that can nourish the growth of human life in the fullest sense.<sup>555</sup>

In Schneiders' view, it is precisely this 'de-racination' of spiritual attitudes that has led to spirituality becoming a consumer commodity.<sup>556</sup> Consequently, we are witnesses to a contemporary understanding of spirituality which no longer relates exclusively to the interior life – as depicted particularly in preconciliar Catholic and medieval spirituality – but instead to just about every aspect of life.<sup>557</sup>

Numerous voices can be heard speaking about Eastern and Western spirituality, women's spirituality, New Age spirituality, secular and esoteric spirituality, interfaith and ecumenical spirituality, children's spirituality, even spirituality and aging, spirituality and health, spirituality and gender, spirituality and human wellbeing. There is also talk of spirituality in management, business, sociology, economics and geography, even of spiritual capital in analogy to social and cultural capital. This may at first seem surprising, but it points to the undeniable fact that, in its most inclusive sense spirituality is so all embracing that it does indeed touch everything.<sup>558</sup>

This extensiveness may be partly due to secular society's rediscovery of the spiritual dimension, which was lost or at least hidden in a largely materialist world. Since spirituality is no longer purely the domain of religious institutions and impinges upon almost every aspect of life, the term is more widely used and understood both as a generic category and as a specific category. This commodisation of spirituality emanates from an emphasis on the self, particularly from self-development.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> King, *The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life*, 2.

<sup>556</sup> Schneiders, 'Spirituality and the God Question,' 246.

<sup>557</sup> Ursula King, 'Introduction: Spirituality, Society and the Millennium – Wasteland, Wilderness or New Vision?' in *Spirituality and Society in the New Millennium* ed. Ursula King (Brighton; Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), 1-14.

<sup>558</sup> King, *The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life*, 3.

<sup>559</sup> King, 'Introduction: Spirituality, Society,' 3; Schneiders, 'Spirituality and the God Question,' 246.

A further indication of the expansion of interest in spirituality is evidenced in its emergence in academic and professional disciplines. While the inclusion of spirituality as an area of research in religious studies or theology is not surprising, more intrigue surrounds the examination of spirituality by disciplines such as nursing, social theory, economics and geography, disciplines not traditionally connected with religion.<sup>560</sup> At the 2014 international conference of the British Association for the Study of Spirituality, presentation topics were diverse and not consistent with spirituality's traditional associations. Presentations included 'the role of spirituality for the elderly', 'spirituality within psychodynamic counselling', 'student identity', 'atheist spirituality' and 'reconciling spirituality with the concrete sciences', to name but a few. Here we see again the wide application of the term, which has also contributed to the proliferation of literature on the subject. Carlos Eire comments that anyone who has tried to keep up with the literature on spirituality knows what the writer of Ecclesiastes meant when he states "of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness to the flesh" (Eccl. 12:12).<sup>561</sup>

This increase in popular and academic interest in spirituality has led not only to the production of more literature, but also to consideration of spirituality as an academic discipline in its own right, on which I expand below. The study of spirituality seems to have no boundaries. At best, writes Eire, it is

like the proverbial infinite sphere of the philosophers, with its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere. At worst, one can see it as a fuzzy Gordian knot of sorts, a tangled and disorderly ball, woven of left over threads from other reputable disciplines.<sup>562</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> Holmes, 'Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,' 24; Schneiders, 'Spirituality and the God Question,' 247.

<sup>561</sup> Eire, 'Major Problems,' 54.

<sup>562</sup> Eire, 'Major Problems,' 54.

Attempts to delineate boundaries only serve to further disorientate and bemuse. Holmes suggests one of the reasons for bewilderment is that most people *live* spirituality, and consequently lived spirituality has priority over its academic study; he draws a comparison with playing the clarinet as opposed to learning about its theory or manufacture.<sup>563</sup> If this is the case, then as human researchers and academics there is an ‘emancipatory interest in becoming more human’, which takes priority over academic objective research.<sup>564</sup> Schneiders remarks that it is artificial to pretend that researchers have no interest in their own spiritual lives or in assisting others with theirs.<sup>565</sup>

A further challenge to the study of spirituality is the metaphysical aspect of its development. Spirituality develops along two lines, one of which emphasises the supernatural and incorporates a belief in a transcendent being. While the other is a belief in a more solid reality, but one that recognises that humans have a spiritual nature which may or not may not include admitting to a spiritual reality who/which is not necessarily a Creator.<sup>566</sup> We must work with this ‘bifurcation’, states Holmes, because spirituality is purely self-centred. While it is more refined than pure hedonism, it tends to be a spirituality of ‘self-cultivation’, which is “often difficult to distinguish from self-absorption or narcissism whose extirpation has always been a primary object of religious spirituality”.<sup>567</sup> However as already stated centring only on the transcendent has the potential to become imitative, static and anchored in the past.<sup>568</sup> For Holmes a middle ground should be sustained, one which allows spirituality to be

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<sup>563</sup> Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,’ 26.

<sup>564</sup> Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,’ 26.

<sup>565</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 16.

<sup>566</sup> Holmes, ‘Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,’ 26.

<sup>567</sup> Schneiders, ‘Spirituality and the God Question,’ 246.

<sup>568</sup> King, ‘Spirituality,’ in *A New Handbook of Living Religions*, see under Contemporary Perspectives on Spirituality.

both material and corporeal. It is this middle ground that Schneiders refers to as the *spiritual life*, the “ongoing interaction between the human spirit and the Spirit of God”. In any study of spirituality, states Schneiders, the human spirit and the Spirit of God are given equal attention.<sup>569</sup>

Interest in women’s spirituality is part of the development of spirituality in the modern era. This new spirituality, described as the *womanspirit* movement or as *spiritual or metaphysical feminism*, emerged during the second phase of the women’s movement in the twentieth century.<sup>570</sup> Feminist spirituality did not emerge from a religious tradition but as a result of the realisation that there has been a dichotomisation of body and spirit, with the latter assigned to the female and the former to the male.<sup>571</sup> As such women were identified with their sexual and reproductive function and excluded from the realm of the spirit over which men presided. Feminist spirituality is not only the acceptance of the body, which has been re-evaluated, but also the reclaiming of women’s rights in the spirit.<sup>572</sup> Whilst some feminist activists perceive spirituality as averse to social change and activism, others see it as the only means to sustain practical advocacy and personal engagement.

Taking a more humanistic or anthropological approach, King supports that women can find spiritual resources in their own experiences, their suffering, and their oppression and can also gain a sense of empowerment and achievement. These resources are not necessarily in connection with their faith, for they can be independent of faith.<sup>573</sup> Of faith traditions she

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<sup>569</sup> Sandra Schneiders, ‘A Hermeneutical Approach to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Elizabeth Dreyer and Mark Burrows (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 51.

<sup>570</sup> King, *The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life*, 125.

<sup>571</sup> Sandra Schneiders, ‘Feminist Spirituality,’ in *Women’s Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development*, ed. Joann Wolski Conn (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1996), 32.

<sup>572</sup> Schneiders, ‘Feminist Spirituality,’ 32, 36.

<sup>573</sup> King, *The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life*, 132.

states that while these can nurture the spiritual lives of women, they may need to be adapted and reinterpreted.

Pentecostal women on the whole live their lives through the Spirit of Christ. A feminist discussion of the feminine divine, goddess and *thealogy* (the systematic exploration of Goddess theology which is aligned to witchcraft and wicca, goddess-orientated religion) would be given short shrift by most participants. Women spirituality has indeed developed, but Pentecostal women's worldview would not be able to integrate such development into their practice.

#### **4.5. Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality**

Once spirituality is defined or the phenomenon identified, spirituality as a discipline or area of study (not as a phenomenon) can be approached historically, theologically or anthropologically. Schneiders has derived these approaches from her own reading, discussion and observation, and therefore her taxonomy is '*de facto* heuristic' and not '*de jure* prescriptive'.<sup>574</sup>

##### **4.5.1. The Historical Approach**

Spirituality has been studied primarily by historians of spirituality rather than by scholars of spirituality whose approach is historical. The former approach spirituality as trained historians whose interest is Christian religious experience within the context of Christian theology; the latter are primarily scholars of spirituality, not history, for whom the historical approach is useful for their study. For example, 'nuptial spirituality', that is mystical experiences expressed through the metaphor of 'marriage to Christ', may be studied in the spirituality of the thirteenth-century Beguines, the commentaries of the Song of Songs or the

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<sup>574</sup> Schneiders, 'Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,' 19.

works of Origen, Bernard of Clairvaux or others. The objective of the research is to understand nuptial spirituality rather than to construct a history of nuptial spirituality. The historian of spirituality may be interested in the development of nuptial spirituality and at the same time *or* in another work be exploring the development of nuptial spirituality within a specific historical context.<sup>575</sup>

#### **4.5.2. The Theological Approach**

The extension of the referent 'spirituality' beyond its original Christian mooring raised concerns among scholars in the field of Christian spirituality, and particularly among those who work in confessional settings such as a seminary or institutions for Christian formation. Of particular concern was the distinction of Christian spirituality as an academic discipline. Christian spirituality as a discipline is distinct due to the content and dynamic of the adjectival qualifier *Christian*, with its connection to the creed, code and cult of the church. Scholars of this discipline have little to no interest in non-Christian spiritualities. They take a theological approach, whilst acknowledging the importance of the history of spirituality and the interests of those who have no Christian or religious affiliation, their primary focus is the specifically Christian character of spirituality. Their interest is in the unique content and dynamic of the tradition, essentials not shared by other faith traditions, as they form the focus of a theological perspective.

Conversely, although their approach is theological in that the Bible, theology and sacramental practice provide the framework for their work, their interest and focus are not theology but spirituality. Unlike theology, in particular systematic theology, the objective of the study of spirituality is not the elucidation of universally applicable theory neither is it prescriptive, the starting point is religious experience as such and not a predefined premise or

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<sup>575</sup> Schneiders, 'Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,' 20.

proposition. Further such an approach does not focus entirely on the interior life but explores the holistic character of the human subject and her religious experience. The challenge lies in that there is more to the study of Christian spirituality than articulated faith because the human subject is a complex being

...participating in a plurality of communities and whose multiple dimensions and involvements particularize the appropriation and expression of faith, often in ways that the general theory of the faith (theology) cannot or has not yet comprehended or articulated.<sup>576</sup>

Theology alone is insufficient and although an interdisciplinary approach might be seen as ‘a trendy postmodern methodological choice’, in Schneiders view spirituality as lived experience can only be adequately researched by drawing upon other disciplines.<sup>577</sup>

#### **4.5.3. The Anthropological Approach**

Influenced by post-modernity, the anthropological approach is the most recent of the approaches. Whilst the anthropological approach is attentive to the contributions of both history and theology, its explicit concern is with those dimensions of spirituality that are accessible only to the non-theological disciplines such as ‘aesthetics, linguistics, psychology and cosmology’.<sup>578</sup> It assumes the existential nature of spirituality, where ‘spirituality is an anthropological constraint’ and therefore a constitutive dimension of what it means to be human. Via this dimension ‘self transcendence toward ultimate value’ can occur.<sup>579</sup> However, mere possession of this existential trait does not automatically precipitate transcendence as the capacity may or may not be nurtured, and even if nurtured it may or may not be religious or prioritise transcendence. As an existential characteristic, this capability is prior to any

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<sup>576</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 25.

<sup>577</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 26.

<sup>578</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 28.

<sup>579</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 26.

actualization, Christian or otherwise. Further Christianity is identified as just one of a number of actualizations, a notion only conceived due to the cultural and religious interactions that have characterised the late twentieth century.

Additional to the existential nature of spirituality, the influence of experience is also characteristic of and integral to this approach – not experience as it is intrinsic to Christianity, but in terms of the meaning of experience, ecological concerns and gender issues. Further it also attends to the analogies with, challenges to, and the affirmations of Christian spirituality from and by other religious and non-religious spiritualities. In summary this approach seeks answers to contemporary rather than theological or historical questions through an interpretation of the Christian religious experience.

For example, the scholar would probably be less interested in the history or theology of mysticism in relation to social change than in how mystical experience interacted with political involvement in the non-violent teaching and practice of Martin Luther King, Jr, and how black preaching as rhetoric inaugurated ordinary oppressed people into that mystical-prophetic dynamic. In other words, was the Civil Rights Movement essentially a spiritual phenomenon, and, if so, how is it to be understood? Is the Christian character of King's non-violence essentially different from that of Ghandi? What do the answers to such questions imply about real social change?<sup>580</sup>

Although this approach was birthed in the milieu of modernity, it emphasises a hermeneutical methodology in which hermeneutics has a double focus, that of understanding and that of explanation and appropriation. The first focus leads to an investigation of the phenomenon of Christian faith experience within the widest and richest frame of reference, in order to understand it as deeply as possible, thereby expanding both the qualitative and the quantitative knowledge of Christian spiritual life. The second focus widens the horizon of the interpreter thereby leading to the personal transformation of the researcher, not necessarily in terms of better Christian practice or in being better or doing better, but rather in terms of

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<sup>580</sup> Schneiders, 'Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,' 28.



humanity, as her or his spiritual dimension is enriched and deepened. This methodology can lead to a broader and deeper understanding of Christian spirituality.

This approach supports Christian identity, Christian practice and Christian experience, including spirituality. Christianity in general and Christian spirituality in particular are perceived, however, as participants in a public discourse and as such need to and should maintain their specifically Christian identities amidst the other spiritualities. In this discourse Christianity does not dictate –or no longer dictates – despite its dominant and influential history.

Due to the reality that ‘spirituality is studied in a variety of academic contexts ... the objectives pursued in these diverse settings significantly influence what is studied and how it is studied’, making a variety of approaches advantageous.<sup>581</sup> These approaches should not be understood as prescriptive; they are ‘orienting frameworks’ which lead to the development of methodologies which are appropriate for the study of a particular phenomenon within the field of spirituality. These aforementioned approaches reflect the types of knowledge or skills the student and or researcher of spirituality pursues and, further, reflect the aspects of spirituality that she or he finds most interesting or important.<sup>582</sup>

### **Analysis**

This chapter presented literature which showed the development of spirituality as understood by Alister McGrath. The centrality of scripture in the lives of the women resonate with the worldview of the women who are the focus of this study, Glen Scorgie and his exploration of Paul’s use of *pneumatokoi* would be of particularly resonance due to the importance of the work of the Spirit in the lives of Pentecostal believers. Where Pentecostal agreement could deviate is in the interpretation of the church and society in particular the individual nature

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<sup>581</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 28-29.

<sup>582</sup> Schneiders, ‘Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality,’ 28-29.

that spirituality developed, while at the same they would embrace what the institutional church perceived as ‘questionable enthusiasm and even heretical forms of spiritual practice’. Early in the history of the movements epithets such as ‘holy rollers’ in America at least was used to describe Pentecostals, it was out of the dogmatic forms of the church that Pentecostalism grew as a revolt against the institutionalization of Christianity.

Although the spirituality of the church was influenced by such as Guyon, the Pentecostal church has its own influencers. The influencers tend to be male and vary according to continent but due to the use of media their influences have become more global. These include such as Matthew Ashimolowo, T.D. Jakes, Yongi Cho, Kenneth Hagin and David Oyedepo, and Enoch Adboye. Interestingly the women in this study did not mention the influence of any of the ‘well known’ names when asked about who had influenced their spirit it was other women, particularly mothers who were mentioned more than once. As carriers and transmitters of tradition and values Pentecostal mothers are key to the transference of Pentecostalism. This is borne out in the empirical work of Mark Cartledge who I refer to in chapter 7. In his work talks about their centrality in the transmittal of the born again experience through the influence of mothers.

Both Corliss Heath and Jacqueline Mattis support the underlying premise of this work namely the spirituality.<sup>583</sup> This work seeks to elucidate Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience what Heath and Mattis demonstrate is the centrality of spirituality to the Black-American community, this I believe is also true of Africans and African-Caribbeans and further both have shown that there is an understanding of spirituality and that this understanding is well developed in Black women. One of the reasons Mattis suggests is the socialization of women into church at an early age. This bears out in the present data 47 of

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<sup>583</sup> Corliss D Heath, ‘A Womanist Approach to Understanding and Assessing the Relationship between Spirituality and Mental Health,’ *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 9, no. 2 (2006), 155-170. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 9, 2013); Jacqueline Mattis, ‘African American Women’s Definitions of Spirituality and Religiosity,’ *Journal of Black Psychology* 26, no 1 (February 2000), 101-122.

the 52 participants had varying degrees church experience prior to conversion. This ranged from women who visited church when they visited their dad during holidays to those who were born and attended church every Sunday.

Professor Schneiders understanding of spirituality as lived experience is particularly useful for this work because as already has been stated it takes seriously the role of experience as an integral constituent of spirituality. Everyday experience is for the most part absent for an understanding of spirituality as it is not considered religious or spiritual. Schneiders challenges this view by broadening the understanding of what is considered religious or spiritual experience. As such Schneiders has opened up the way for Black women to understand their everyday experience in the light of their Pentecostal worldview. Further it allows me as the researcher to include the experiences of slavery and colonialism and understand its place in the process and development of Black British Pentecostal spirituality. Important to this understanding is that spirituality is not static but as has been already stated it ebbs and flows. To my mind it not only ebbs and flows but is also developing beginning with an understanding of the Supreme Being as men and women worked out their faith to what we see in the present.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

This chapter presented a survey of the development of spirituality, beginning with its understanding in the Old and New Testaments before considering its ecclesial designation and its wider popular appeal. It has examined the work of Sandra Schneiders and her approaches to the study of spirituality. While this chapter treated spirituality generally, the following chapter examines more specifically Pentecostal spirituality from the history and perspective of BBPW.

## Chapter 5

### **Black British Women and the Development of Pentecostal Spirituality**

While word count limitations prevent a full discourse on the development of Protestant spirituality up to and including Pentecostalism, the following serves as a locale from which to examine the emergence of Pentecostal spirituality. It should be noted that both spirituality and Pentecostalism are relatively new areas of study, with Pentecostalism on a continuing quest to determine its spirituality whilst holding in tension the effects of culture and gender on its expression and spirituality.

This chapter offers a construction of Pentecostal spirituality from the history and perspective of BBPW as drawn from the available literature. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first, “Black Christian Spirituality: Its African Undergirding and History”, presents, as the subtitle states, an overview of the genesis of Black Christian spirituality starting in Africa where men and women had a developed spirituality. The second, “Pentecostalism in Jamaica and Pentecostal Spirituality”, continues the development through what Austin-Broos calls Jamaican creole religious discourse. The chapter culminates with an exploration of research conducted by Diane Austin-Broos, Elaine Foster, Valentina Alexander, Nicole Toulis and Anthea Butler. Although none of these researchers examines Pentecostal spirituality specifically, together they bring multidisciplinary perspectives to the study of BBPW and their experience.

## 5.1. Black Christian Spirituality: Its African Undergirding and History <sup>584</sup>

In chapter four Christian spirituality was discussed generally, but within the literature little attention has been paid to the spiritualities of Christian Black people. That is not to say that nothing has been written, but spirituality has primarily been presented from the perspective of the Euro-American West. The following section offers a construction of Black spirituality which though not generic has commonalities among people of an African heritage, just as the general construction presented in the last chapter has commonalities for people of non-African heritage. The chapter begins by examining African spirituality, where we find the spiritual roots of the women in this study.

Even when academic work in the area of African religion has been undertaken, very little has been written about the spirituality out of which that religion emerges. Despite diversities, there are commonalities among the various African cosmologies, and the point of unification among those diversities is the underlying spirituality.<sup>585</sup> The “spirituality” of people refers to the “animating and integrating power that constitutes the principal frame of

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<sup>584</sup>Michael Battle, *The Black Church in America: African American Spirituality* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006); Garnet Parris ‘Black Spiritualities’ in *New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spiritualities*, ed. Peter Sheldrake (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 151-152. Garnet Parris states that the concept of Black spirituality is “something of a misnomer”, as Battle echoes, ‘Black’ does not adequately describe this complex and diverse people group. The Black community is multi-layered “not only in race but in cultural and linguistic groupings”. ‘Black’ in Britain at least, is an “ethnic political description” on the one hand, a synonym for dark skinned people but it additionally it can “encompass those who are not white or those engaging in resistance to domination” what Robert Beckford calls “counter hegemonic resistance”. Such a wide geographical spread and diversity, calls for recognition of Black spiritualities and not Black spirituality. Parris and Battle submit that traditions of African people on the continent and in the diaspora are diverse, yet they are united in their underlying spirituality for Battle this is a spirituality of community and Parris this is demonstrated in the broad consensus among African people that the three forms of life, nature, history and spirit ‘which are ontologically united and hence interdependent’

<sup>585</sup> Parris, *Spirituality of African People* 18, 21-22.

meaning for individual and collective experiences”.<sup>586</sup> In his article ‘Reaching Back and Pushing Forward’, Archie Smith writes of African-American Christian spirituality that has enabled and empowered African Americans in the face of ‘radical evil’, a spirituality with a conviction that every human is a child of God.<sup>587</sup> Michael Battle contends that though many books have been written regarding Black (American) religion and theology, little has been written about Black spirituality.<sup>588</sup> This is paradoxical for Orabator, who contends that spirituality was no stranger to the African. Although the expression of Christianity conveyed by missionaries may have been a cerebral, however the religion of the African was spiritual.<sup>589</sup> Long before missionaries arrived, African men and African women had developed ways of expressing and interpreting their experience of God, and these articulations would sustain them through the merciless regime of slavery.<sup>590</sup>

Spirituality is one of the basic concepts of primal religions, the African Independent Churches and Black mainline churches. Primal religions are said to be the source of African spirituality.<sup>591</sup> The late Kwame Bediako echoed this view, stating that primal religions form the most fundamental and basic form of religious expression and precede and contribute to other religious systems; as such they represent humanity’s common religious heritage.<sup>592</sup>

‘Primal religions’, also known as African Traditional Religions (ATR), describes the

basically monotheistic if operationally polytheistic heterogeneous religions of Africa that stretch backward into the dim reaches of prehistory and forward, in

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<sup>586</sup> Paris, *Spirituality of African People*, 22.

<sup>587</sup> Archie Smith Jr, ‘Reaching Back and Pushing Forward: A Perspective from African American Spirituality,’ *Theology Today*, 56 (April 1996): 44-58; 47-48.

<sup>588</sup> Michael Battle, *The Black Church in America: African American Spirituality* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 8.

<sup>589</sup> A. E. Orabator, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* (New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 141; Allan Anderson, *Moyo: The Holy Spirit in An African Context*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991), 4.

<sup>590</sup> Orabator, *Theology in an African Pot*, 141; Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, xiii.

<sup>591</sup> Du Toit, ‘African Spirituality,’ 39.

<sup>592</sup> Du Toit, ‘African Spirituality,’ 39.

many localised forms and languages, into modern Africa. It is the worship of God and gods, closely identified with primordial ancestors, tribal histories and founders of ethnic groups and civilisations, that exist in all parts of the continent.<sup>593</sup>

Despite deep religiosity, that is the strong sense of the divine which permeates the mundane and extraordinary aspects of African life which is interpreted by many Westerners as superstitious or fatalistic, African spirituality is often absent from the description of African religion.<sup>594</sup> We see it instead presented with its priesthood comprising of males and females, ‘its prayers and forms of worship, shrines, sacred places, taboos and respect for the ancestors, all of which have arisen out of or because of spirituality’.<sup>595</sup> However, states Anderson, the experience of God through these forms is more important than the theology of God, “action is at least as important as reflection; and religion is fundamentally both something you believe or confess and especially something ... you do”.<sup>596</sup> Further this experience is not a systematic ritual to be replicated and neither is it a strictly private or personal experience. It is rather the experience that “unfolds with every echo of God’s presence resounding in the hills and caves where we encounter the great God”.<sup>597</sup> It has been argued that any such systemization is in fact a counter-discourse developed to vindicate the African as neither irreligious nor immoral, which for many years was a dominant view. What are understood as features of religion are in reality ‘systems of advice and explanation’.<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>593</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 6.

<sup>594</sup> Orabator, *Theology in an African Pot*, 140. Gerrie Ter Har, *How God became African* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2009), 41-43.

<sup>595</sup> Orabator, *Theology in an African Pot*, 142.

<sup>596</sup> Anderson, *Moyo*, 4.

<sup>597</sup> Orabator, *Theology in an African Pot*, 141.

<sup>598</sup> Olusegun Oladipo, ‘Religion in African Culture: Some Conceptual Issues,’ in *A Companion to African Philosophy* ed Kwasi Wiredu (Blackwell Publishing, 2005) Blackwell Reference Online. 25 July 2012 <<http://0->

As stated above, although scholars of African religion do not always venture into descriptions of African spirituality, when they do take that path, how is African spirituality characterised? Jacob Olupona suggests, first, that African spirituality is defined by its myths – these differ from people to people – which explain the origin of the world, death, and various institutions that are key to understanding traditional life. And, second, he proposes that African spirituality gives context to the place of ritual as a means of expressing the relationship between the human and the divine. Finally, Olupona states, it provides a referent to explain methods of divination.<sup>599</sup> African spiritual experience is one in which the ‘divine’ or the ‘sacred’ interrelates with human experience. The interrelatedness is such that there is no distinction between the religious and secular spheres. Uniquely, Olupona begins his characterisation by elucidating African spiritual experience, not by debating whether or not these features fit into the pattern of religion held up by Western theologians, historians and religions. Western religious traditions are often adopted as standards for determining what religion should look like in other parts of the world.

The twenty-five volume *World Spirituality: An Encyclopaedic History of the Religious Quest* covers various spiritualities from around the world and from a number of faith traditions. The third volume in the series, devoted to ‘African Spirituality’, is edited by Olupona, who introduces essays written by both African and non-African scholars and presents adequate examples of the core spiritual values and the complexity of the religious situation in the continent.<sup>600</sup> From the outset the distinction between religion and spirituality is not clear. Scholars such as Sandra Schneiders argue that the two are separate and distinct,

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<sup>599</sup> Olupona, ‘Introduction,’ xvi – xvii.

<sup>600</sup> Olupona, ‘Introduction,’ xviii.



while others advocate that spirituality and religion are two conflicting realities, related in inverse proportions – the more one is spiritual, the less one is religious; the two then are rivals for serious allegiance. Yet others understand them as partners in a single enterprise ‘which like body and spirit are in tension but essential to each other’.<sup>601</sup>

### **5.1.1. Christian Spirituality of people of African Origin: Development**

The Christian spirituality of people of African origin has its own identity which is interwoven with African customs and thought.<sup>602</sup> Du Toit contends this reality must be respected and accepted along with the consequent theologies that will emerge.<sup>603</sup> Peter Paris states that the ‘theological understandings and values’ of Black Christian spirituality are a result of exploitation and oppression. However, I contend that Black Christian spirituality is as a result of an underlying spirituality which was prior to the exploitation and oppression of slavery. These injustices served to develop the spirituality which was already a part of the African’s experience. This spirituality found expression in primal religions and continued to influence and inform Black Christian expression in general and Pentecostalism as expressed in the BMPCs specifically. It is, I believe, a spirituality that is dynamic and in process. McGrath acknowledges the diversity and complexity of Christian expression and the divergence that exists over the interpretation of foundational beliefs. He identifies personal issues, denominational considerations and attitudes to the world, culture and history as important factors in shaping spirituality.<sup>604</sup> Spirituality is shaped and this should be borne in mind in any consideration of Black Christian spirituality in general and of Black women’s Pentecostal spirituality in a British context.

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<sup>601</sup> Schneiders, ‘Religion and Spirituality,’ 3.

<sup>602</sup> du Toit, ‘African Spirituality,’ 38.

<sup>603</sup> du Toit, ‘African Spirituality,’ 38

<sup>604</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 8. Personal issues denote the individual proclivities.

The spiritual basics are acquired in childhood as worship, prayers and songs, practices and behaviours which endear and endure despite their incomprehensibility and theological lightness; they are lodged in the heart more so than in reason and go back many years, possibly generations.<sup>605</sup> I contend that this is the case with Black Christian spirituality – spiritual basics are lodged in the heart. Primal religions, states Bediako are the most fundamental and basic form of religious expression; they precede and contribute to humanity's common religious heritage.<sup>606</sup> This supports Paris' claim that although the enslaved people came from different regions of African, there was some commonality in their cosmology.<sup>607</sup> The introduction of Christianity was another part of the process, it served to further shape African spirituality.

It is sometimes assumed that Christianity was introduced to enslaved Africans by western missionaries in the Americas. Wilmore identifies, however, three 'visits' of Christianity to Africa centuries before the systematic enslavement of Africans. The first was to Egypt, Ethiopia and Nubia. John Mark, companion to the Apostle Paul established the church in Egypt as early as 42 CE.<sup>608</sup> The Acts of the Apostles makes reference to the 'Ethiopian' eunuch, the first known Christian convert from that area. It is not clear how influential he was in the spreading of Christianity in that area or in the surrounding areas of Kush, Nubia or the Meroitic Kingdom. Christianity in the Nubia was introduced by Byzantine missionaries.<sup>609</sup> Christianity in Ethiopia was greatly influenced by Ezana, the first

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<sup>605</sup> Reinhild Traitler, 'Feminist and Orthodox Spiritualities: Womens Spirituality,' *Ecumenical Review* 60, no. 1/2 (January 2008): 16-28, 17 *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 9, 2013).

<sup>606</sup> du Toit, 'African Spirituality,' 39.

<sup>607</sup> Paris, *Spirituality of African People*, 18.

<sup>608</sup> Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 7-12. In these pages Wilmore provides an overview of the establishment of the Church in Egypt. See also Albert Raboteau *Slave Religion: The invisible institution in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 6-7.

<sup>609</sup> Acts 8: 26-40; Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 10 – 11.

African Christian King, who underwent his conversion around 330 CE.<sup>610</sup> In 1633 Jerome

Lobo, a Jesuit priest witnessed public worship in an Ethiopian Orthodox Church and wrote:

They sing the Psalms of David which as well as other parts of the Holy Scriptures, they have a very exact translation in their own language... The instruments of musick (*sic*) made use of in their rites of worship, are little drums, which they hang about their necks and beat with both hands. ... They being their consort by stamping their feet on the ground, and playing gently on their instruments, but when they have heated themselves by degrees, they leave off drumming and all to leaping, dancing and clapping their hands, at the same time straining their voices to their utmost pitch... and seem rather riotous, than a religious assembly. For this manner of worship they cite the Psalm of David, 'O clap your hands all ye nations'. They misapply the sacred Writings to defend practices.<sup>611</sup>

The second visit of Christianity was by Prince Henry 'The Navigator' and Vasco da Gama, both Portuguese. They established new trade routes into Africa, and along with trade re-introduced Christianity to the African continent. By 1485 Portuguese captains had brought baptised enslaved people back to Portugal and priests were sent to Congo to evangelise the Congolese. By 1492 the King and Queen of Congo had been baptised and given the Christian names John and Lenora. Despite Congo being a Christian Kingdom, the spread of Christianity was limited, mainly to royals and nobles. A Portuguese national was appointed as Bishop of Sōa Tome but was unable to reside in the new Christian kingdom, which led to a Congolese national who had studied in Lisbon being consecrated as bishop.<sup>612</sup> Christianity was established in Angola by 1574, but lack of pastoral care, the insistence on monogamous relationships along with the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade greatly undermined the evangelistic effort.<sup>613</sup> The third visit came during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century,

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<sup>610</sup> Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 8. Coins minted in the early part of Ezana's reign bear the pagan symbol of the crescent and disk, while those minted later has the cross as a symbol.

<sup>611</sup> Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 10.

<sup>612</sup> Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 16.

<sup>613</sup> Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 16.

when freed African-American and native African Christians evangelised the people of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria.<sup>614</sup>

Du Toit argues that the accommodation of Christianity by Africa peoples was not instantaneous but part of a process, a process that took place not because Africa's religion was impoverished but rather because Christianity could be accommodated without much tension. In addition, African belief in a "transcendent divine power primordially related as creator and preserver of all that is" was similar to the Christian cosmology, which would have made acceptance easier.<sup>615</sup>

### **5.1.2. Black Christian Spirituality in Jamaica – Ongoing Development**

The racism that perpetuated the Atlantic slave trade, the limitations placed on the enslaved, the refusal of the British to evangelise the enslaved along with proscriptions against any exhibition of African religious practices facilitated a largely individual and internal spirituality. The opportunities for public expression for the most part occurred during clandestine meetings with creative use of the oral traditions of music, song, sermon, prayer, testimony and folklore.<sup>616</sup> Paris states that such events provide an example of the African propensity to retain inner values in spite of their external conditions.<sup>617</sup> The coupling of internal reflection and external expression brought about the development of an alternative understanding of the Christian gospel, which was proclaimed and celebrated in various ways.<sup>618</sup> Enslaved people adapted their African religion to their new environment, a new

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<sup>614</sup> Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 17–18.

<sup>615</sup> Paris, *The Spirituality of African Peoples*, 35-36.

<sup>616</sup> Paris, *The Spirituality of African Peoples*, 38.

<sup>617</sup> Paris, *The Spirituality of African Peoples*, 38 – 39.

<sup>618</sup> Paris, *The Spirituality of African Peoples*, 39 - 40.

context that included Christianity.<sup>619</sup> The majority of the Caribbean enslaved were evangelised by foreign missionaries, first by Moravians who in 1754 were a small and isolated group and then by the Black Baptists who were to have the most significant influence.<sup>620</sup> The ‘Great Awakening’ had a marked impact on the general understanding of Christianity and on how it related to slavery, an impact all the greater because it included slave owners, who were part of the revival. First, slave owners were persuaded to allow (encourage) their slaves to attend church. Second, the conversion experience, the work of God in the heart was understood as part of God’s saving grace, and to appreciate this was more important than understanding the minutiae of Christian doctrine. Third, revivalism evoked a sense of equality, with meetings taking place in public and baptisms conducted in local rivers amidst scenes of enthusiasm. Baptism as a ritual was possibly familiar to the enslaved, reminding those that could remember of their African religious context.<sup>621</sup>

It is not possible to evaluate the extent to which the Christian message was accepted by the enslaved, but certainly the missionaries had exposed their hearers to a new range of alternatives.<sup>622</sup> This acknowledgement, along with the fervour of the ‘Great Awakening’, served to further influence the development of a Black Christian spirituality. This was a spirituality borne out of the Black person’s own experience of oppression.<sup>623</sup> This development had ramifications, in that some of the enslaved left missionary sects to form

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<sup>619</sup> Olupona, ‘Introduction,’ xv.

<sup>620</sup> See Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 165. Gordon, S. (1996) *God Almighty Make Me Free*. [online] Bloomington: Indiana University Press available from NetLibrary accessed March 24 2010, C. Ballew, ‘The Impact of African American Antecedents on the Baptist Foreign Missionary Movement 1782-1825.’ Ph.D, Thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002.

<sup>621</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 160-161, 166

<sup>622</sup> See 3.3. The Development of Jamaican Christianity page 87

<sup>623</sup> David Killingray and Joel Edwards, *Black Voices: The Shaping of our Christian Experience* (Nottingham: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 24; Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 39.

independent Christian groups under Black leadership.<sup>624</sup> Those choosing to remain in missionary sects appropriated European Christian teaching to their experiential context. In both instances there developed what Alexander terms ‘the independent Black Christian consciousness’, what Wilkinson refers to as the “Afro-Caribbean stream of faith”.<sup>625</sup> Their experiential context included drawing upon memories from their African past recreated within the confines of their Caribbean present.<sup>626</sup> In actuality then, although their everyday existence was to work dutifully, the God they knew in Africa was a divine power who sustained life and would not have wanted for them the life of suffering and meaningless they now endured.<sup>627</sup> The extent of African influence upon spirituality was not uniform, but was dependent upon the degree of ‘expressive autonomy’ allowed in terms of teaching and preaching Christianity and on the missionary group involved in the conversion. Whatever the individual case, the conversion process did not occur in a theological and cultural vacuum, but was a response to a contextualised Christian faith, a constituent of Caribbean theological experience.

After the abolition of slavery Black Christianity continued; some of its characteristics included “powerful oratory and preaching style, depth and experience in hymn singing, heart-felt telling of testimony”. These expressions were manifestations of faith, believed to be resultant of a face-to-face encounter with a divine deliverer.<sup>628</sup> An overarching characteristic of the emerging faith was its communality; its strength was not in individualistic contemplation and worship but in ‘collective revelation and power’. This communality was greatly dependent on the contributions of the Black woman. As stated above, one of the roles

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<sup>624</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 41; Alexander, ‘A Mouse in a Jungle,’ 87.

<sup>625</sup> Alexander, ‘A Mouse in a Jungle,’ 87.

<sup>626</sup> Alexander, ‘A Mouse in a Jungle,’ 89.

<sup>627</sup> Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 40.

<sup>628</sup> Alexander, ‘Mouse in Jungle,’ 88; Wilkinson, *The Church in Black and White*, 41.

she assumed was to keep the family together, and ‘family’ extended to the church family.<sup>629</sup>

The communal aspect of worship provided opportunities for everyone to participate, however the ‘vibrancy and the liveliness’ indicative of such worship was primarily reflective of the female persona.<sup>630</sup>

## **5.2. Pentecostalism in Jamaica and Pentecostal Spirituality**

Pentecostalism is thought to have been introduced to Jamaica by independent American missionaries around the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>631</sup> After tentative beginnings in 1910, during the 1920s and 1930s Pentecostalism took root. A Jamaica bishop stated Jamaicans accepted Pentecostalism because of the ‘spirit filled’ world they experienced. The “whole world of Jamaica was busy with spirits, so the message of the Holy Spirit was welcome. Americans did not need to tell Jamaicans that”.<sup>632</sup>

Pentecostalism’s theological forerunner, the Holiness Church with its doctrine of sanctification or ‘holiness’ through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, emphasised a quiet receipt of the Holy Ghost, an intellectual assent rather than an enthusiastic rite.<sup>633</sup> ‘Filled’ believers from the Holiness traditions were empowered to abstain from sin, in contrast to ‘filled’ Pentecostals, who emphasised healing and/or the display of glossolalia.<sup>634</sup> Austin-Broos observes that for the Jamaican Pentecostal Church a process of sanctification renders the believer morally pure and capable of leading a holy life. The prevalent belief amongst laity

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<sup>629</sup> Alexander, ‘Mouse in Jungle,’ 88; Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theologies*, 171.

<sup>630</sup> Foster ‘Women and the Inverted Pyramid,’ 51.

<sup>631</sup> D.D. Bundy, ‘Jamaica (II).’ in *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* revised and extended ed. S. Burgess, and E. Van Deer Maas, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 146-147.

<sup>632</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 115.

<sup>633</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 98, 97

<sup>634</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 98.

and pastors is that sanctification is a complete work and ‘bears an intrinsic relation to being a saint’.<sup>635</sup> This status is important especially to the older women who dress in white as a symbol of their status. While some of the mothers wear white only for special occasions, others dress in white every Sunday.

Though the first Pentecostal evangelists were probably Euro-Americans, a large contingent of Jamaican evangelists and leaders soon emerged. It was these men and women who were primarily responsible for the spread of Pentecostalism on the island.<sup>636</sup> During this timeframe the Church of God (COG), a US-based denomination – and also the denomination of which the majority of the participants in the study are members – was introduced to Jamaica. The relationship began in 1917 when J. Wilson Bell, an evangelist and minister of the Apostolic Faith Church, based in Jamaica, contacted COG headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee, regarding affiliation.<sup>637</sup> It would seem that Bell became an affiliate, but following the First World War and in the midst of a flu epidemic and the onslaught of financial depression, Wilson Bell left the Church of God. He had been charged by the Jamaican authorities with manslaughter after refusing to seek medical help for one of his children, who consequently died after eating unripe ackee.<sup>638</sup> Wilson Bell, along with many of his peers, believed that God was a healer and may have been averse to any medical intervention. However his commitment to the healing power of God was in opposition to the British colonial order of the day; despite this he was subsequently acquitted of the charge.<sup>639</sup> With Wilson Bell’s departure the COG evangelistic effort continued under the leadership of Rudolph Smith, a Jamaican, and the son of a prosperous small farmer.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 18

<sup>636</sup> Austin- Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 99; Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 79.

<sup>637</sup>; Austin- Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 102.

<sup>638</sup> A plant which is Jamaica’s national dishes. When it is fully ripe it is edible but unripe is poisonous.

<sup>639</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 103.

<sup>640</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 103.



### 5.3. Pentecostal Spirituality

Pentecostal spiritualities, which reflect the conviction that Pentecostals experience God through the Spirit, are expressed in liturgies that are primarily oral, narrative and participatory. Pentecostal spirituality is a pneumatocentric spirituality, meaning that the Spirit invades all of human life. The appeal of Pentecostal and charismatic forms of spirituality could be due in part to contextual spirituality.<sup>641</sup> However, Pentecostals are not a homogenous group and Pentecostalism can take on distinct forms due to a Pentecostal pneumatology that is unrestricted enough to engender the incarnation of the gospel in different cultural forms.<sup>642</sup>

Six accounts which are representative of current scholarship in the area of Pentecostal spirituality follow. They are presented in chronological order, beginning with Walter Hollenweger, who is called the father of Pentecostalism, followed by Steven Land, a Pentecostal scholar and a Pentecostal, followed by comments from Harvey Cox, an observer of Pentecostalism. The work of Daniel Albrecht and Russell Spittler, who are also Pentecostal scholars and Pentecostals, follows, and the discussion culminates with a paper presented at the Society of Pentecostal Studies in 2004 by Jeanne Porter entitled ‘The Practice and Principles of Life in the Spirit: An Examination of Pentecostal Spirituality’.

*The Study of Spirituality*, edited by Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold, covers the theology and history of Christian spirituality from the Old Testament up until contemporary times.<sup>643</sup> It includes chapters on Hindu, Islamic and Jewish spirituality as

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<sup>641</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 201.

<sup>642</sup> Allan Anderson, ‘Diversity in the Definition of “Pentecostal/Charismatic” and its Ecumenical Implications,’ *Mission Studies* 19, No 1 (2002) , 40-55; 47

<sup>643</sup> Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold. *The Study of Spirituality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

well as a section entitled 'Current Spiritualities'. The inclusion in this section of the chapter 'Pentecostals and the Charismatic Movement' by Walter Hollenweger recognises this relatively new spirituality in broader academic circles. Hollenweger was raised in a Swiss Pentecostal church but is now a Presbyterian. As a missiologist he is a leading academic in the study of Pentecostalism.<sup>644</sup>

In Jones et al's edited volume Hollenweger writes of the brutal and bitter experiences of William J Seymour (1879–1922), a primary figure in North American Pentecostalism and of the subsequent spread of the expression worldwide. Despite 'innumerable brutalities' Seymour refused to be embittered, but 'lov[ed] in the face of hateful racism', striving for ecumenical unity despite the opposing and sometimes hostile social climate.<sup>645</sup> Hollenweger explains that Seymour's resilience in the face of such opposition was due to his spirituality. Hollenweger's explanation of Pentecostal spirituality is partly based upon Seymour's Christianity with its 'black folk' leitmotif. This formed the religious and cultural basis for Seymour's subsequent role as the leader of the Azusa Street revival.<sup>646</sup> It meant, for example, the introduction of spirituals and liturgy into worship services, incorporated by Seymour at a time when such music was considered inferior and not particularly fit for Christian worship.<sup>647</sup> Much of Pentecostal expression emanates from Black American Christianity,

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<sup>644</sup> Mark Cartledge, 'Pentecostal Theological Method and Intercultural Theology,' *Transformation* 25, no 2-3 (April-July 2008), 92.

<sup>645</sup> Walter Hollenweger, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement,' 550; Walter Hollenweger, 'The Black Roots of Pentecostalism,' in *Pentecostals after a Century*, eds. Allan Anderson and Walter Hollenweger (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 40.

<sup>646</sup> Hollenweger, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements,' 550; MacRobert, 'The Black Roots of Pentecostalism,' in *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*, ed. Cornel West and Eddie Glaude, (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 617, 621.

<sup>647</sup> Walter Hollenweger, 'After Twenty Years' Research on Pentecostalism, *International Review of Mission*, 75 (1986):3-12; 5.

with, as already noted, Pentecostalism's music and oral culture growing from Black roots.<sup>648</sup> That Black worship expression would influence white Pentecostals was unusual though not unique, due at least in part to the 'Great Awakening'. This revival began in the years just prior to Pentecostalism, and at this point African Christian and Historic Christian modes of worship and expression began to blend as Blacks and Whites worshiped together.<sup>649</sup> What was unusual was that Seymour – a Black man – was at the centre of a revival that was not cognisant of differences in class, race, ethnicity or gender. Hollenweger asserts that Seymour's 'black folk' spirituality and the Azusa Street revival constitute the heart of Pentecostal spirituality, and that Pentecostal history should be measured from this point.<sup>650</sup>

On this basis Hollenweger elucidates five main features of Pentecostalism: (1) an oral liturgy; (2) a narrative theology and witness; (3) the maximum participation of the whole community in worship and service; (4) the inclusion of visions and dreams in public worship; and (5) the understanding of the relationship between body and mind manifested by healing through prayer.<sup>651</sup> These characteristics remain central to the movement today and are thought to have contributed to the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism worldwide.<sup>652</sup>

Although Hollenweger acknowledges Seymour as pivotal to Pentecostal spirituality, he also recognises the influence of Western Christian theology, particularly its Catholic roots

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<sup>648</sup> Walter Hollenweger, 'An Irresponsible Silence,' *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 7, (2004):220

<sup>649</sup> Walvin, *Black Ivory*, 161.

<sup>650</sup> Hollenweger, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements,' 551.

<sup>651</sup> Walter Hollenweger, 'The Black Roots of Pentecostalism,' in *Pentecostals after a Century*, eds. Allan Anderson and Walter Hollenweger (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), Hollenweger, 'After Twenty Years' Research.,' 5.

<sup>652</sup> MacRobert, 'Black Pentecostalism,' 621; Anderson and Hollenweger, *Pentecostals after a Century*, 13 – 29; Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global charismatic Christianity*, 235; Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 81. Hollenweger is not suggesting that the liturgy cannot be written but that it is initially produced orally; it has a structure and hence is not chaotic. It is the orality of Pentecostalism that allows even the poor to take active part in the service.

and the evangelical influences of the nineteenth-century holiness movement.<sup>653</sup> The ‘father’ of the holiness movement, John Wesley, read and translated devotional writing for his lay preachers. While it is not clear how far Wesley would have agreed with Holiness teachings, he recognised the need for a second religious crisis experience. When Holiness roots met Black spirituality via William Seymour, Pentecostalism was the result. Hollenweger states that simply put, Pentecostalism “is in part the result of an encounter between catholic spirituality and black spirituality on American soil”.<sup>654</sup>

Steve Land’s book *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, based on his doctoral thesis, is an important contribution to the study of Pentecostal spirituality. According to Land at the time he was writing at the turn of the twenty-first century Pentecostal scholarship was either apologetic or explanatory, and research on Pentecostal spirituality amounted to a few chapters in books, articles and dictionary entries, sources which he deems to have been ‘descriptive and suggestive’. His work is a contribution to what he states as the “present need for a comprehensive, theological analysis and constructive explication of Pentecostal spirituality”; Pentecostal spirituality, he believed, needed to be explored with an ‘analytical, constructive theological intent’.<sup>655</sup> Land defines spirituality as ‘the integration of beliefs and practices in the affections which are themselves evoked and expressed by those beliefs and practices’ and his work sets out to “explicate a Pentecostal spirituality which is apocalyptic, corporate, missional and essentially affective”.<sup>656</sup>

Harvey Cox goes further, stating that Pentecostalism attends to a spiritual emptiness, one that cannot be filled with creed or ritual but which connects with a “primal spirituality...

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<sup>653</sup> Cartledge, ‘Pentecostal Theological Method and Intercultural Theology,’ 92.

<sup>654</sup> Holleweger, ‘Charismatic Renewal in the Third World: Implications for Mission,’ *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* 4, (1980), 68.

<sup>655</sup> Steven Land, *Pentecostal spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, (Cleveland, TN:CPT Press, 2010), 14.

<sup>656</sup> Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, (Cleveland, TN:CPT Press, 2010), 20..

that largely unprocessed nucleus of the psyche in which the unending struggle for a sense of purpose and significance goes on”.<sup>657</sup> It is, states Cox, what classical theologians have called the ‘*imago dei*’.<sup>658</sup> Cox describes the elements of Pentecostal spirituality as: (1) primal speech – ecstatic utterance, glossolalia, speaking in tongues praying in the Spirit – the language of the heart, (2) primal piety – mystical experience, trance, visions, healing, dreams, dance and other archetypal religious expressions, and (3) primal hope – unshakeable expectation of a better future millennialism, an insistence that a new age is about to dawn.<sup>659</sup>

Daniel Albrecht was one of the first Pentecostal scholars to identify Pentecostal spirituality as a distinct spirituality.<sup>660</sup> Through an analysis of Pentecostal spirituality by way of its rituals and rites, Albrecht states, “Pentecostal spirituality fosters a deep even mystical, piety that emphasises the immanent sense of the divine”.<sup>661</sup> He identifies ritual as corporate service, which he defines as acts, actions, dramas and performances that the worship community creates, continues, recognises and sanctions. These behaviours and actions express the appropriate attitudes, sensibilities, values and beliefs of the worship community. A rite is a portion or phase of the service, for example, the sermon, song service, a particular practice or specific act or enactment, or a set of actions recognised by Pentecostals a part of the ritual.<sup>662</sup> Through the lens of ‘ritual’ and its accompanying ‘rite’, the symbols, qualities, processes and consequences of Pentecostal spirituality can be accessed and comprehended.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>657</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 81.

<sup>658</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 81.

<sup>659</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 81-83.

<sup>660</sup> Daniel Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal Charismatic Spirituality*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999; Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*. (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 203 -204.

<sup>661</sup> Daniel Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal Charismatic Spirituality*, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 24.

<sup>662</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 22.

<sup>663</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 22, 146.

The rituals and rites serve to organise experiences and give them definition, thereby functioning as ‘conscious and intuitive effort[s] to construct a sphere to encounter God’.<sup>664</sup> The goal of the Pentecostal corporate service is to experience God, symbolised in the felt presence of the divine.<sup>665</sup> Hence this model of Pentecostal spirituality contains a mystical element, which involves both the desire and claim to experience God directly and intimately.

Albrecht considers that the mystical element is accompanied by an additional strong social dimension, because ritual is very much a communal act. Conversely, there are also private acts such as devotions, personal witness, and individual experiences with God, as well as other pietistic practices; these personal experiences are independent of Sunday corporate services. Albrecht asserts that the heart of Pentecostal-charismatic spirituality, both corporate and individual, is the liturgy, which is principally enunciated in the worship service.<sup>666</sup> Further, Albrecht observes that spirituality is not just mystical, social and liturgical; it is also ‘lived experience’. Such ‘lived experience’ actualises the spiritual dimension, which is a fundamental dimension of what it means to be human. Specifically, this dimension consists of spiritual or religious experience, beliefs, convictions and patterns of thought, emotions and behaviour in respect to what is ultimate or God.<sup>667</sup>

Albrecht conducted his study among three predominantly White American churches in California.<sup>668</sup> He purposely did not include churches which were considered ‘ethnic’ by their own denomination, due to the demands of conducting a cross-cultural study. Additionally Albrecht desired to reflect churches of a “more baptistic and reformed

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<sup>664</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 149.

<sup>665</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 187.

<sup>666</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 189.

<sup>667</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 23.

<sup>668</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 82-83, 95.

Pentecostal tradition”.<sup>669</sup> He is careful to state that the results of his work are not meant to be generalised but reflect the congregations which he studied.<sup>670</sup> In a review of Albrecht’s work, Lewis acknowledges these limitations and asserts that they hinder any broad application. The study’s full merit is only evident in the light cast by further studies which engage diverse Pentecostal traditions over several geographical areas.<sup>671</sup>

Russell Spittler observes that among Pentecostals the adjective ‘spiritual’ is used more frequently than the noun ‘spirituality’. For the Pentecostal ‘spiritual’ refers to the individual having or possessing the qualities of being spiritual, in other words it refers to how people are and not to what they do.<sup>672</sup> A spiritual person is a believer “who is perceived to be, to use the tradition’s own jargon open to the things of the Spirit, fully consecrated to God, endowed perhaps with one or two spiritual gifts besides speaking in tongues”. Being spiritual is a ‘personal quality of an individual’. Spirituality therefore does not come from the movement, rather the movement’s spirituality comes from individuals. Spittler determines that the Pentecostal’s ‘spiritual’ is the non-Pentecostal’s ‘religious’. He further delineates Pentecostal spirituality as the ‘practices and styles of Classical Pentecostals’.<sup>673</sup> Like Hollenweger and Cox have noted above. Spittler identifies implicit values as characteristic of spirituality: in his case, he cites orality, spontaneity, otherworldliness, biblical authority and experience.

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<sup>669</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 72-73.

<sup>670</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 21.

<sup>671</sup> Paul W. Lewis, review of ‘Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality,’ by Daniel Albrecht, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5, no. 2 (July 2002): 321-323: 322.

<sup>672</sup> R. Spittler, ‘Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,’ *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements Revised and Expanded*, ed. Stanley Burgess and Eduard Van der Maas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 1096

<sup>673</sup> Spittler, ‘Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,’ 1096.

In her paper examining Pentecostal spirituality, Jeanne Porter utilises Walter Principé's distinct yet interdependent levels of spirituality and applies them to the study of Pentecostal spirituality.<sup>674</sup> These levels are: (1) the existential level – which corresponds to an individual's lived experience; (2) the intercultural – which pertains to the group or religious community, faith tradition or movement; and (3) the academic level – which is the formal study of the principles of a spiritual tradition.<sup>675</sup> At level one she evaluates the work of Russell Spittler, who was one of the first to define and describe Pentecostal spirituality.<sup>676</sup> Russell Spittler defines spirituality in terms of practices associated with Pentecostalism.<sup>677</sup> In this category she also evaluates the spirituality of Pentecostal leaders William Seymour, Charles Mason and Aimee Semple McPherson. At level two, 'the formulation of a teaching about the lived reality', here she explores studies conducted by Daniel Albrecht, Steve Land (both of whose work has been explored above) and David Daniels. Porter presents Albrecht's understanding of Pentecostal spirituality through the lens of ritual practices and rites. Land attempts "to provide insight into ... the inner logic of Pentecostal spirituality" and to map out the underlying structure of the tradition, and does so through a series of dialectics which characterise Pentecostalism and its practices, including "spirit-body", "oral-narrative" and "already-not yet".<sup>678</sup> David Daniels, a scholar and a Pentecostal, discusses 'tarrying', a term taken from Luke 24:29, where Jesus asked his disciples to 'tarry' in Jerusalem until they were

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<sup>674</sup> Jeanne Porter, 'The Practice and Principles of Life in the Spirit: An Examination of Pentecostal,' (paper presented at 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of SPS, Marquette, Milwaukee, WI. 2004).

<sup>675</sup> Porter, 'The Practice and Principles...', 4-5.

<sup>676</sup> Spittler, 'Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,' 1096 – 1102.

<sup>677</sup> Spittler, 'Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,' 1096.

<sup>678</sup> Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit*, 12.



endued with power. This typically Pentecostal practice is explored by Daniels as it is experienced within the Church of God in Christ.<sup>679</sup>

The six scholars have explicated Pentecostal spirituality by utilising a number of different frameworks. While all make important contributions to the discussion of Pentecostal spirituality, they also all seem to propose a homogenous spirituality, one that is biased to the United States. Sufficient attention has not been paid to the influence context, history and gender can have on spirituality. In particular an exploration of Pentecostal spirituality as expressed by Black British women is not reflected. Although corporate worship, as an aspect of spirituality is an important aspect, lived experience - to which Albrecht make reference - has a more central role than he acknowledges. The present research conducted among BBPW indicates as such, which will be explored in chapter six.

#### **5.4. Pentecostal Spirituality as Expressed by Black British Women**

This is a difficult section to write as the sources are few. Additionally the history and geography are not linear. Neither does the development of BBPW's spirituality fall within neat boundaries; conversely it has come about via a series of violent and oppressive events that have had both positive and negative effects on world history and geography. This section is written with special reference to Black women whose lived experiences have inculcated, adapted and developed their spirituality.

Despite the length of time Black women have been in Britain, scant attention has been paid to their history, experiences and contributions to British society, excepting the notable contribution of Mary Seacole (1805–1881), a Black British subject of Jamaican birth, who as a nurse looked after British soldiers during the Crimean War of the 1850s. Aside from this

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<sup>679</sup> The Church of God in Christ is a predominantly African-American Pentecostal denomination which was founded by Charles Mason in 1897.

exception, Black British women have been rendered invisible and silent.<sup>680</sup> Not surprisingly, we therefore know relatively little about their spirituality. Enslaved Black Caribbean's discovered that their conversion to Christianity, indicated by baptism, did not engender freedom, equality or acceptance by Europeans. It was this acknowledgement that influenced the development of a Christian spirituality that was borne out of an African-Caribbean lived experience.<sup>681</sup> That spirituality empowered some slaves to leave missionary sects to form independent Christian groups under black leadership, while those choosing to stay appropriated European Christian teaching to their experiential context. As previously stated African influenced spirituality was not identical for every people group, but was contingent upon the degree of 'expressive autonomy' permitted in terms of teaching and preaching and the missionary group involved in the conversion. Importantly their response to the message of Christianity was not because of a theological or cultural vacuum but was due to the contextualisation of their Christian faith. The contextualisation developed over time as a constituent of their Caribbean theological experience or a Jamaican creole religious discourse.<sup>682</sup>

Diane Austin-Broos' seminal work *Jamaica Genesis: Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders* is principally a sociological ethnographic study but provides some useful insights for Pentecostal spirituality in Jamaica. Using her work I will highlight the stories of women who demonstrated Pentecostal spirituality in their lives.

As stated above Christian women and their correspondent experience have played an essential role in the development of their faith. Women were essentially responsible for the

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<sup>680</sup> David Dabydeen, John Gilmore and Cicely Jones *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), x; David Killingray and Joel Edwards, *Black Voices: The Shaping of our Christian Experience* (Nottingham: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 18.

<sup>681</sup> Killingray and Edwards, *Black Voices: The Shaping of our Christian Experience*, 24.

<sup>682</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, xv.

character and rapid spread of Pentecostalism in Jamaica, women such as Melvina E. White and Mother Russell have already been mentioned. Austin-Broos describes two ordinary women who were affected by the Pentecostal message. One woman, because of what is described as ‘the power of God in her life’ gifted land to the church and was willing to dig up the coconut, banana and coffee trees which were of significant value in a farmer’s world, she was willing to do this because of the ‘power of God in her life’.<sup>683</sup> In 1930 another woman, who had been sick since 1919, ‘heard a voice’ telling her to call the elders of the church. She called the Baptist, Congregational Church and Holiness Church and did not receive healing, but when she was prayed for by someone from a Pentecostal church she was healed. Not only did she begin to attend the church, but through a preached message she decided to return to her hometown, where she planted a Pentecostal church.<sup>684</sup>

Jenny was one of the participants in and attended one of the churches of Austin-Broos’ study. Jenny had four children with two different fathers. When she became a Pentecostal she was living with the father of the younger children, and despite her encouragement, he refused to marry her; he also had a drink problem. Jenny ‘drove’ him out. She worked as a sales clerk and hoped one day to be a supervisor. At church she was a deaconess, and she went to church in the morning and evening on a Sunday, attended a deacons’ prayer group on Tuesday night, and sometimes went to tarry with the unsanctified on Friday night. Once every two weeks her mother held a house meeting, which Jenny and her children attended. Between her children, work and church, Jenny was very busy. Pentecostalism was, however, a form of healing in the midst of ‘urban pressure’ and ‘meagre means’. It made her life full and optimistic, affording a woman of modest social standing a more superior status. In her testimony at one of her mother’s house meetings she stated how

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<sup>683</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 105.

<sup>684</sup> Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis*, 106.

she had ‘turned it [her life] over to Jesus’ and her life was changed. Her body was being healed from back pain as a result of child birth, her relationship with work had improved – she was now in line for promotion – her relationship with her children and even with their father had been improving since she ‘turned it over to Jesus’.<sup>685</sup> Jenny’s testimony is an example of spirituality as ‘lived experience’. Sandra Schneiders states that Christian experience, not theology, spans times, places and cultures and that in the midst of contemporary life, Christian experience generates theology which in turn generates spirituality as experience.<sup>686</sup>

It was their reflections on experiences such as these, I believe, that undergirded the spirituality of Pentecostal men and women when they migrated to Britain during the 1950s and 1960s. Jamaican women migrated to Britain in large numbers to join husbands or fiancés or to pursue a career.<sup>687</sup> As England was perceived Christian, émigrés anticipated witnessing the same zeal they had observed and experienced in their own churches and among Christian missionaries in the Caribbean, but this was not to be the case.

Current academic research regarding these early years in Britain is wanting, there is even less about the BBPW’s experience. I engage with the research conducted by Elaine Foster, Valentina Alexander and Nicole Toulis, who do not consider Pentecostal spirituality directly, but who do offer insight into Black British women’s church and spiritual experience.<sup>688</sup> Foster’s work centres on the experience of inequality and the power wielded

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<sup>685</sup> Austin-Broos *Jamaica Genesis*, 222 - 227.

<sup>686</sup> Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality, Strangers, Rivals or Partners,’ 271.

<sup>687</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 1. In June 1948 the *SS Empire Windrush* brought 492 West Indians, mainly Jamaicans to England, among them was one female stowaway. By 1961 the number of West Indians in Britain had increased to 172,379. Unlike other migratory trends the proportions of women to men were roughly equal.

<sup>688</sup> Foster, ‘Women and the Inverted Pyramid,’ 45-68; Alexander, ‘A Mouse in a Jungle,’ 85-107; Toulis, Nicole. *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England*. Oxford; New York: Berg, 1997.

by women in the Black Pentecostal church.<sup>689</sup> Alexander's primary focus is Black liberation theology in a British context. Here her work concentrates on the internal politics of the Black church. Toulis' research examines the Black church as a social space that allows for the construction and reconstruction of Black identities, with particular regard for the women of the New Testament Church of God. In her work she demonstrates that the Pentecostal church serves to reconstruct Black identity as a counter to the negative images attributed to Black people in British society, an important process in the post-migratory experience of people from the Caribbean in 1950s and 1960s.<sup>690</sup>

An addition is Anthea Butler's *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World*,<sup>691</sup> in which Butler presents a historical, religious and social overview of the development of the Women's Department of the Church of God in Christ, primarily through its leaders. The Church of God in Christ is currently the largest Pentecostal Church in North America.<sup>692</sup> I have drawn on the work of Butler because she takes seriously, though briefly, the influence of spirituality in the lives of Black American women. Together the works of Foster, Toulis, Alexander and Butler provide a useful overview of and insight into the lives of BBPW, and where they diverge, they provide areas for further discussion and research.

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<sup>689</sup> Bernice Martin in the essay 'The Pentecostal Gender Paradox: A Cautionary Tale for the Sociology of Religion,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*, ed. Richard Fenn (Blackwell Publishing: Malden, 2003) 52-56 refers to the power wielded by women in Pentecostalism as the Pentecostal Gender paradox whereby women are extended moral authority in the church and in the home but are denied official positions of leadership in the church.

<sup>690</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 48.

<sup>691</sup> Anthea Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

<sup>692</sup> Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 2; C.E. Jones 'Church of God in Christ,' in *DPCM*, ed. Stanley Burgess and Gary McGee (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Regency Reference Library, 1988). 204-205. Church of God in Christ was founded by Charles Harrison Mason in 1907. The church has over five million adherents worldwide.

Both Alexander and Foster maintain that the émigrés for the most part were from Christian backgrounds and/or were regular church attendees in Jamaica. This hegemony was a factor in what was to become for Pentecostal women a ‘language of resistance’ one which they were used to in Jamaica, which they now used in the United Kingdom. The language of resistance incorporated first the implementation of a religious lifestyle which emerged from *their* appropriation of Christianity, an expression with which they could identify both culturally and experientially. Second, they created an institution that would meet their needs in a context they developed. The institution was adapted to meet the needs and challenges of their new environment. They had the means to because as women they were the principle transmitters of socio-religious traditions and further, during 1950s and 1960s Black women were attending church in greater numbers than men.<sup>693</sup> Foster, Alexander and others agree that Black women were the major contributors to the flourishing of the BMC in Britain, but they were also major contributors to the historic mainline churches.<sup>694</sup> Particularly in the Black Majority Pentecostal Church (BMPC) women were responsible for the teaching and organisation of Sunday School, which was not just for children, nursery classes, day centres for the elderly and supplementary schools.<sup>695</sup> They did the paperwork, administration, organisation and catering for meetings and conventions. Women were often exhorters and evangelists and in those roles would lead worship. Women ‘encourag[ed] and prompt[ed] deeper worship and praise in order to experience manifestation of the Spirit amongst the

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<sup>693</sup> Calley, ‘Pentecostal Sects among West Indian Migrants,’ 55-64. Calley states in his paper that although he observes equal numbers of men and women in the congregation; more men than women migrated to the UK hence proportionally more women attend the Pentecostal church. He further claimed that the Pentecostalism appeals more to women than to men. 60; Foster, ‘Women and the Inverted,’ 52.

<sup>694</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 225.

<sup>695</sup> See note 255 in which the term Black Majority Church is explained ‘Pentecostal’ is used here to identify the church more specifically.

believers'.<sup>696</sup> In the early years of the NTCG the women's ministries were very evangelistic and as such enabled the church to grow. The women visited the sick and supported those in need including missionaries in Africa and ministers in newly formed churches whose congregations were not in a position to support them financially.<sup>697</sup>

Male pastors of BMC's state that 65 to 95 per cent of their congregants are female. Toulis proposes, however, that it is misleading to read women's religious participation in terms of externally defined dichotomies, because these employ narrow definitions of power, oppression and advantage, themes that Foster and Alexander and others take up.<sup>698</sup> To understand the dynamics of gender in the BMC, 'the preoccupation with visible office as a sign of power has to be put aside', as must be preconceived ideas about who is a liberated Black woman. Toulis suggest that the focus instead should be on the 'everyday relationships between man and women and the construction of gender in the churches'.<sup>699</sup>

As a social anthropologist, Toulis understandably emphasises power and relationships; as a theologian, I contend that the focus be not on relationships but on spirituality. I propose this because, as Foster observes, the dominant factor of worship is the guidance and moving of the Holy Spirit and women are expected to be attuned to the move.<sup>700</sup> The tenor of the service is set by the worship leaders, mainly women who encourage and prompt the congregation to intense worship and praise in order to lead to an encounter with the Spirit.<sup>701</sup> Although Toulis' work is anthropological, she identifies the Holy Spirit as the agency for 'exceptional and occasionally dramatic religious oratory', for example in speaking in

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<sup>696</sup> Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 49.

<sup>697</sup> Oliver Lyesight, *Forward March (An Autobiography)*, 56.

<sup>698</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 215; Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 49; Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid,' 47.

<sup>699</sup> Toulis *Believing Identity*, 215

<sup>700</sup> Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid,' 52.

<sup>701</sup> Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 94; Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid,' 49.

tongues, prophecy and discerning danger.,<sup>702</sup> She states that though these acts are not gender specific, in her research male members rarely observably harness the agency of the Holy Spirit. Even though the Holy Spirit is not allocated by gender, its expression is observed mainly among women. Women are well aware of the triple jeopardy of race, gender and class, but the life-affirming influence of the church is a source of strength, and their involvement is one of calling, with their primary responsibility being to God.<sup>703</sup> Foster and Alexander refer to inequalities in terms of leadership in the church hierarchy, but the ‘call’ and women’s ‘spirituality’ – which may be part and parcel of the same thing – provide the impetus for their action, a call which evidently outweighs inequality.<sup>704</sup>

Butler supports the assertion that the church is a space where womanhood is empowered, not just ontologically, but also spiritually and temporally. In their quest for spiritual empowerment, that temporal empowerment is realised, as we saw demonstrated in Jenny’s testimony, in which her health, family relationships and work all improved as a result of Pentecostal spirituality.<sup>705</sup> While the empowered woman functions within traditional ecclesial and patriarchal boundaries, in the case of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), women have so creatively wielded this capacity that their influence has extended beyond the church and had extended into civic and economic structures.<sup>706</sup> That influence stems from a

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<sup>702</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 225.240.

<sup>703</sup> Foster, ‘Women and the Inverted Pyramid,’ 49; 55.

<sup>704</sup> It would be interesting to study the motivations Pentecostal men.

<sup>705</sup> See page 168

<sup>706</sup> Examples of civic and community involvement are found in the Pentecostal church in the UK. Esme Lancaster (1918-2009) found peace of mind within a Pentecostal church after years of suffering from severe depression she worked in many areas of the church but become ‘uneasy...[with] her church’s lack of vision for a practical community mission. She moved to the New Testament Church of God in Handsworth, Birmingham and although the church at the time had no expansive social program the pastor was open to the possibility. Through Esme’s encouragement and practical advice a Saturday school and nursery were established on the church premises. She went on to found The Young Mothers Relief Association providing care for the children of lone mothers. She was asked to speak of her work at the 1998 Labour Party Conference where she asked for more funding to support nursery education and in 2000 she was awarded an MBE for her community work. <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+dream+becomes+reality+for+teacher%3B+Esme+Lancaster+MBE+talks+to...-a063771147> [accessed 1/28/2012]; <http://www.birminghammail.net/news/top-stories/2009/02/09/final->



belief in sanctification, states Butler, which is the impetus for women's engagement in the church and hence in the world. In Butler's view, scholars have tended to perceive belief as a side-line issue. She challenges this position by recognising the importance of religion in the lives of women. She further questions the assumption that people concerned with the spiritual disciplines are not concerned with 'this world', and as such are labelled 'accommodationist' or 'other worldly'. One reason for this judgment may be that sanctified beliefs do not 'translate easily into recognisable or measurable radical behaviour'.<sup>707</sup> Sanctification with its theological and cultural underpinnings in the Holiness and evangelical movements is a gradual process requiring holy living, the practice of prayer, fasting and scripture study. Butler identifies the visible characteristics of a sanctified life as respectability, proper dress, homemaking, education and respect for the gender norms and activities associated with a sanctified life, which included street preaching and ecstatic worship. Consecration, as stated in Jeremiah 9:17–20, and prayer were key aspects of women's work.

This is what the LORD Almighty says:

“Consider now! Call for the wailing women to come;  
send for the most skillful of them.

<sup>18</sup> Let them come quickly  
and wail over us  
till our eyes overflow with tears  
and water streams from our eyelids.

<sup>19</sup> The sound of wailing is heard from Zion:

‘How ruined we are!  
How great is our shame!  
We must leave our land  
because our houses are in ruins’.”

<sup>20</sup> Now, you women, hear the word of the LORD; open your ears to the words of his mouth. Teach your daughters how to wail; teach one another a lament.

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tributes-to-handsworth-community-leader-esme-lancaster-97319-22883025/ [accessed 28/1/2012] ;Councillor Sybil Spence of the Soho Ward in Birmingham was elected councillor in 1986 and from 1997-1998 served as Mayor of Birmingham and was the first black female mayor of a European city. Councillor Spence is a member of the New Testament Church of God in Handsworth. <http://www.bebirmingham.org.uk/spotlights.php?id=104> [accessed 30/1/2012].

<sup>707</sup> Butler, *Women in the Church*, 5.

In conclusion, the above discussion has demonstrated the centralization of the experience of women within the BMC. Squire gives three reasons why an exploration of women's spirituality is necessary. (1) The experiences of women are essentially different. While many experiences are common to men and women – being born, hunger, pain, joy, for example – the experiences of menstruation, pregnancy, giving birth, being a mother and menopause are unique to females. Traditional theology does not explore the spiritual implications of these experiences, nor does it answer questions which emerge from these experiences. An emerging female theology would attend to these questions not as a replacement of traditional theology but rather as a supplement. (2) Attitudes towards women are different, as even a cursory examination of history demonstrates. Almost all women in the Bible, save a few notable exceptions, were interpreted as non-persons. Where they were honoured as wives and mothers, they existed in relationship to a male; otherwise they were categorised as 'whores and harlots'. With the advent of Christianity came a brief time of equality before women were again presented in dichotomous terms, either as the virgin on a pedestal or the temptress who was evil. In the Middle Ages the stereotypes of – witch or nun was added. In the United States, which was founded upon a struggle for religious and political freedom, such liberties and rights were not extended to women. This inequality continues today, where contemporary media perpetuate attitudes towards women as seductresses, sexy sirens, self-sacrificing mothers or silly females. Christianity has been male dominated to the extent that many women perceive women as second-class citizens and believe that that is the way God planned it. Yet for millions of women the God of the Bible is a liberator and His word speaks over against the words of the world. (3) The words and symbols in the spiritual quest carry different meanings to women. Feminist theology argues that men have defined words and named them, and words can therefore signify differently for women. The term 'mankind' may well encompass women, but to use 'mankind' is still not

the same as using the term 'everyone'. When God is described in symbolic terms, more often than not male symbols are utilised, such as King, Father and Judge.<sup>708</sup>

## **5.5. Conclusion**

Africans who were forcibly taken to Jamaica already had a developed spirituality. Although they originated in different people groups and the specifics of their religious experiences were diverse, their cosmology and its undergirding spirituality had points in common. The refusal of the British to evangelise the enslaved helped to develop their African spirituality in their new context, through a Jamaica creole religious discourse. The work of missionaries and the fervour of the Great Awakening helped to develop a Black Christian spirituality, which empowered the enslaved to the extent that some left the missionary churches and formed their own independent churches, while some of those who remained appropriated teachings to reflect their experience. Although denominational Pentecostalism was introduced from the United States, the Jamaican milieu was ripe for the introduction of the Holy Spirit, as Jamaicans were already familiar with spirits.

Pentecostalism is a relatively new area of study and research into Pentecostal spirituality is ongoing in the work of Pentecostal observers Walter Hollenweger and Harvey Cox, and Pentecostal scholars Steven Land, Daniel Albrecht, Russell Spittler and Jeanne Porter have contributed greatly to the discussion. More attention, however, should be given to the diversities of spirituality that can emerge due to context, history and gender. The final section of this chapter attended to the idea that gender, context and experience can affect spirituality.

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<sup>708</sup> Squire, 'Women and Spirituality,' 326-327.

## Chapter 6

### Listening to Women's Voices

One of the sub-aims of this research is to listen to the voices of BBPW in order to elucidate the contours of a BBPW spirituality. The need to listen to and reflect on the voices or the ordinary theology of BBPW is essential even if only because 'we know so little about those [Black women] whose labour in raising, nurturing and educating their children enabled the survival of their communities over so many centuries'.<sup>709</sup> Dabydeen et al comments that "[B]lack women have been neglected in the history of Britain" mainly because much of their contribution to British society and to the Black British community is largely undocumented. One consequence of the lack of scholarly documentation is that even less is known about their religiosity.<sup>710</sup> This gap in knowledge is one of the main reasons why women's ordinary theology forms the basis for this study. Their ordinary theology is then utilised as data, the analysis and rescripting of which forms the bulk of this chapter.

This chapter can be divided into two sections: the first section presents the empirical-theological method utilised to elucidate BBPW's ordinary theology; the second section charts the responses of fifty-two women who participated in eight focus group sessions as a part of the Women of the Spirit project.

At the outset of this study the intention was to adopt van der Ven's empirical-theological cycle. As stated in the previous chapter van der Ven's approach begins with the development of a problem and goal, followed by theological induction, theological deduction, empirical-theological testing and theological evaluation. The model is based on a theologically driven framework paradigm but which incorporates social science methods to

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<sup>709</sup> Dabydeen, Gilmore and Jones, *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*, x.

<sup>710</sup> Dabydeen, Gilmore and Jones, *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*, x.

inform that theology. However as a result of further methodological study the cycle is incorporated as part of a heuristic process. It is in this regard Cartledge observes that

...practical theology uses a methodology as a guide that allows researchers and students to understand the process through which the study has progressed in order to better evaluate the conclusions and recommendations for renewed action. ...It is a heuristic tool that is as good as the quality of engagement with each different type of source, be it empirical or theoretical

Further, adopting van der Ven's empirical-theological cycle in totality would warrant a lot of time, and as I was living in the US and only visiting England for weeks at a time I had to ensure I made the most of my time whilst visiting.<sup>711</sup> Additionally, Christie makes the claim that the empirical-theological cycle is more suited to hypothesis testing which this study was not aiming to do.<sup>712</sup> I decided to adopt a dialectic model which Cartledge argues is operating beneath the cyclical empirical-theological model. He further suggests that the practical-theological research process can be framed as an dialectic, an oscillation between 'life world (concrete reality)' and 'system (theory or theological metanarrative). In this study I have moved between the two poles beginning with the ordinary theology of BBPW and moving to the dialogue with Pentecostal charismatic literature, history and feminist thought.

Practical theology as an empirical discipline utilises the tools and methods of social sciences to examine theological practice. A qualitative approach was adopted over a quantitative approach because this study seeks to describe and explain meanings revealed in the beliefs, feelings, attitudes, convictions, and practices of individuals and groups, while a

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<sup>711</sup> Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 15.

<sup>712</sup> Ann Christie, *Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology: Ordinary Christology: Who Do You Say I am? Answers from the Pews*. (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 12. This model has been used in exploratory-descriptive work see Chike Chigor, *African Pneumatology in British Context: A Contemporary Study*, Ph.D. Dissertation University of Birmingham, 2011, and model development see Samuel Muindi, *The Nature and Significance of Prophecy in Pentecostal-Charismatic Experience: An Empirical-Biblical Study*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Birmingham, November 2012.

quantitative approach tests hypotheses. Qualitative studies begin earlier in the research process at the stage of ‘beginning to know about something’, the goal is to generate a deeper understanding of the overarching research questions by exploring, describing, and interpreting participants’ contributions.<sup>713</sup> Focus groups facilitate access to participants’ views, experiences, and attitudes, the outcome of which can be adopted as data and or the ordinary theology of BBPW.<sup>714</sup> This study is essentially an exploratory-descriptive study which utilises focus groups to gather data. An analysis of the data through immersion and coding results in themes emerging from the data, the themes are then put in discourse with theological and historical literature.

This second part of this chapter presents the responses of fifty-two women who participated in eight focus group sessions as a part of the *Women of the Spirit* project. Focus groups were adopted as the data-gathering method for the reasons discussed in chapter two. This method is self-contained and while it does not require further data, quantitative or otherwise, for its verification, to situate the analysis within the broader discipline of practical theology, the data is put into discourse with theology and other disciplines.

### **6.1. Problem: The Absence of BBPW Spirituality**

Until now no empirical study has been conducted concerning BBPW to elucidate the contours of their spirituality. This study seeks to describe BBPW spirituality and in so doing fill a void in current knowledge of BBPW and Pentecostal spirituality. The study is therefore both descriptive and explorative.<sup>715</sup> Earlier studies have explored Pentecostal behaviour such

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<sup>713</sup> II. Overview of Focus Group Methodology *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* 77, no 3 (2012): 26 – 33; 29.

<sup>714</sup> II. Overview of Focus Group Methodology, 28.

<sup>715</sup> Van der Ven, *Practical Theology*, 125.

as glossolalia, ritual and healing, possibly because observable behaviour has a definite object.<sup>716</sup> Practice (behaviour and ritual) has often been taken as evidence of a concomitant belief, however, unless one believes that behaviour indicates belief, this reasoning is difficult to accept. In Astley's view, 'there is rarely a one-to-one relationship between beliefs and their expression in actions, and sometimes only a weak empirical correlation'.<sup>717</sup> Although caution should be exercised in inferring a person's theology by observing that person's practice. But what of ineffable experiences? How are they understood or explained by the individual? How can they be explored?

### **6.1.1. Exploratory-Descriptive Design**

Heitink describes the basic approach to practical-theological research as description, interpretation, explanation and action.<sup>718</sup> These components are not independent and disconnected but are reciprocal and as such demonstrate the interrelated nature of the hermeneutical, strategic and empirical. Each aspect, states Heitink, touches theology as well as social science.<sup>719</sup> The present study takes a more basic approach that of description, analysis, theological-reflection (rescripting), and suggestions for action.<sup>720</sup>

Brink and Wood describe exploratory-descriptive design as serving one of two functions; it can contribute to the development of theory or explain and/or describe phenomena from the

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<sup>716</sup> See Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossolalia: An Empirical-Theological study*. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2002); Albrecht, Daniel. *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal Charismatic Spirituality*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999; Alexander, Kimberly Ervin. *Pentecostal Healing: Models in Theology and Practice*. Blandford Forum : Deo, 2006.

<sup>717</sup> Jeff Astley and Leslie J Francis, *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church* (Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2013), 5.

<sup>718</sup> This process is an hermeneutical approach which Schneiders proposes as the framework for the discipline of Spirituality.

<sup>719</sup> Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999), 228.

<sup>720</sup> Ann Christie in her exploration of ordinary Christology also used this basic approach (see Christie, Ann. *Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology: Ordinary Christology: Who Do You Say I am? Answers from the Pews*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2012, 12.

perspective of the persons being studied. This work falls into the latter.<sup>721</sup> The descriptive aspect of the design involves the ‘complete description of a single broad variable or concept within a given population’. The descriptive design is particularly useful when various characteristics of a particular population are either unknown or partially (incompletely) known. For example in response to the question what are the characteristics of successful dieters? Such a question can be answered through a descriptive study.<sup>722</sup> Brink and Wood state that the variable which in this case is spirituality, should be either unstudied or understudied in that population. Descriptive research seeks to give a full description of the subject under study on the basis of empirical data. However the description presented by the researcher is always hermeneutical, it is an interpretive dialogue or conversation. The conversation is created as a result of the theological pre-understandings of the researcher coupled ‘with the practices and meanings of the subject’.<sup>723</sup> Such theological pre-suppositions – if used positively - allows the researcher to understand the theology of the participant.<sup>724</sup> However care needs to be taken that the researcher’s pre-suppositions do not dominate or distort the hermeneutical process.<sup>725</sup>

Exploratory designs explore a concept in depth in as loose and as free ranging a way as possible in order to arrive at a description of an experience or its meaning. Indeed, an exploratory design is also the design of choice when a problem has been identified but no literature exists on the topic.<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>721</sup> Pamela Brink and Marilynn Wood, ‘Descriptive Design,’ in *Advanced Design in Nursing Research* ed. Pamela Brink, Marilynn Wood [e-book] (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc, 1998), 283, 289.

<sup>722</sup> Although the response may be seem easy “they lose weight!” A descriptive response should be a definition of a successful dieter, rather than a description of their common characteristics.

<sup>723</sup> Christie, *Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology*, 14.

<sup>724</sup> Christie, *Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology*, 14.

<sup>725</sup> Christie, *Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology*, 15.

<sup>726</sup> Marilynn Wood, ‘Exploratory Design’ in *Advanced Design in Nursing Research* eds. Pamela Brink, Marilynn Wood [e-book]. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc, 1998), 309. I have outlined the application of exploratory design and descriptive design as it applies to this present study. However both designs have broader applications see Brink and Wood, *Advanced Design in Nursing Research* pp 287 -334



### 6.1.2. Data Collection

Data collection begins with the identifying the subjects and the data collection method which has already been identified as focus group discussion. Data collection involves two steps identifying the purposive sampling and the sample.<sup>727</sup> The data collected is used to illuminate the identified problem which in this case concerns the spirituality of BBPW, and therefore the purposive sample consists of BBPW. From the purposive sample, the sample is identified. The primary data is the ordinary theology of participants which is elicited in response to questions asked and the discussions which ensue in the focus groups. It would be possible to amass the purposive sample by advertising via radio or social media or even within BMPCs. However research suggests that ethnic minority groups are least likely to volunteer to participate in research studies. Additionally time constraints and my relatively short visits to England made this method of recruiting potential participants unfeasible.<sup>728</sup> Instead, I utilised my status as an insider, specifically as a minister in a Pentecostal church, to garner participants to take part in the focus-group sessions.<sup>729</sup>

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<sup>727</sup> Morgan defines a purposive sampling are those members of the population who are eligible to be included in the given sample, while the sample are the actual participants which take part in the focus group. (See 'Sampling Frame' in Vol. 2 of *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given, (California: Sage, 2008), 800-801 and 'Sample' in Vol. 2 of *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given, (California: Sage, 2008), 797-798.

<sup>728</sup> See Lai-Fong Chiu and Deborah Knight, 'How Useful are Focus Groups for Obtaining the Views of Minority Groups?' in *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, ed. Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger (London: Sage Publications, 1999); C.Dunbar, D. Rodriguez, L.Parker, 'Race, Subjectivity and the Interview Process,' in *Handbook of Interview Research*, ed. J.Gubrium and J. Holstein (Thousand Oaks:Sage. 2001), 279-298.

<sup>729</sup> See Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 'Representing Our Own Experience,' in which the writers offer four ways in which an insider researcher can apply insider experience, minimize, utilize, maximize or incorporate.

### 6.1.3. Purposive Sampling: Sourcing and Recruitment of Participants

Uwe Flick has noted that '[s]ampling not only focuses the selection of people to be interviewed for example, or situations to be observed, but also the selection of sites in which such persons or situations can be expected to be found'.<sup>730</sup> I will deal with the latter first.

A research study will often have a number of options when it comes to recruiting those eligible to take part in a qualitative study, options might include existing lists, random samples, and open solicitation. Two methods of recruitment suggested by Vaughn, Sinagub, and Schumm are, i) to make contact with target groups made up of large numbers of individuals who fulfilled the criteria for the focus group, and ii) to use a contact person who is representative of the research criteria and who knows others who meet the criteria for participation.<sup>731</sup> In this case, as an insider, who had ministerial relationships I recruited using both methods. I was able to make contact with BMPC's through gatekeepers who used their relationship with women to encourage them to take part in the study. This relationship facilitated access to NTCG, Community Revival Fellowship and New Harvest Church. All of these churches were attended by individuals who met the focus group criteria-and as such could be part of the purposive sample.<sup>732</sup> This method of recruitment is supported by Madriz, whose research focused on low-income Latinas. Madriz, a Latina herself, used her network of 'friends, students, community leaders and friends of friends' in the recruitment of participants for her focus groups.<sup>733</sup>

For this study the sample was recruited from two denominational churches, namely the NTCG and New Harvest Church, and an independent church, Community Revival

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<sup>730</sup> Flick, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 27.

<sup>731</sup> Sharon Vaughn, Jane M. Sinagub, and Jeanne Shay Schumm, *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 1996), 65.

<sup>732</sup> In fact two of the gatekeepers did participate in respective focus group.

<sup>733</sup> Madriz, 'Focus Groups in Feminist Research,' 377.

Fellowship.<sup>734</sup> The NTCG is an affiliate of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee (hereafter CoG), whose inception in England was due to Oliver Lyesight (1919–2006) and his wife, Rose, who became the leader of denomination's women's movement. In the 1950s Lyesight, a native of Jamaica, was a recent migrant to England concerned about the spiritual welfare of Jamaicans who had also recently arrived in England and started a church to meet the need. By 1957 the church had increased from seven individuals to one hundred and fifty members and had five branches in the Midlands and London. The method of expansion was simple: a new church would become the parent church and from the parent church other congregations would be established.<sup>735</sup> In 2010 the churches website stated it had 107 branches, over 10,000 members and over 20,000 adherents, in 2015 its website states they have 'over 130 churches and missions.'<sup>736</sup>

Community Revival Centre is an independent Pentecostal BMC which began in the 1960s in the East Midlands. New Harvest, which was founded in 2004, is located in the East Midlands and is part of a BMPC denomination with headquarters in the United States. The denomination was founded in 1990 in the United States and the following year the church was incorporated with the COG. Over the next year the decision was made to leave COG and become a denomination in its own right. It now has churches and affiliates across the world.

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<sup>734</sup> NTCG is a denomination of over 100 churches to protect the anonymity of the participants no reference is made to the specific location. Community Revival Fellowship and New Harvest Centre are pseudonyms.

<sup>735</sup> Ira V. Brooks, *Where Do We Go From Here? A History of the New Testament Church of God in the United Kingdom – 1955–1980*. (Great Britain: n.p., 1982), 15.

<sup>736</sup> NTCG New Testament Church of God website <http://www.ntcg.org.uk/corporate/DrOliverLyseight.stm> [accessed 3/2/2010]

#### **6.1.4. NTCG Empowerment Conference**

NTCG's 'Women's Empowerment Conference is an annual event which takes place over the first weekend in October. Over the course of the weekend approximately two thousand women from the NTCG nationwide come together for worship, teaching, preaching and workshops. The women of the NTCG have had a separate meeting since the early days of the denomination. Rose Lyesight informed the writer that initially the women met together for a few hours during the denomination's annual convention. The annual National Convention she refers to has been a feature of the denomination for many years (Kay, 2000). It provides a time for local churches to meet corporately for worship, teaching, preaching, reports on the previous year's activities, to convene a national minister's meeting and women's meeting. Mrs Lyesight went on to state that in those early days the women's meeting would occur on a Saturday morning and afternoon separate but concurrent with the annual national ministers meeting which took place in another part of the venue. By the mid 1960's Mrs Lyesight made a request to the Overseer and the ministers to convene a one day 'Ladies Seminar'. Permission was granted and the first seminar took place at the NTCG in Handsworth, Birmingham under the leadership of Rose Lyesight, President and Joyce Arnold, General Secretary. The seminar replaced the Saturday session in the convention. What began as a few hours during a wider annual meeting continued to develop until it assumed its present form, a weekend conference beginning on Friday evening and ending on Sunday evening under the directorship of the then president Mrs Millicent Brown, the NTCG's Director of the Women's Ministries. The Women's Ministry Director is assisted in the planning and development of the annual program by a board comprised of mainly District Overseer's wives, while the logistics are taken care of by the full time administrative staff of the national office.

The 2010 conference was to take place at Bethel Conference centre on the outskirts of Birmingham. I drove to the conference and booked a nearby hotel for the duration. The Friday evening service was to begin at 7pm, registration commenced at 3pm. I arrived at 4pm and there were already queues of women which stretched outside the door waiting to register. Most people in the queue were with friends or relatives who chatted, joked and laughed as they waited. Occasionally you would hear a scream of excitement as women who had not seen each other for a long time would run to hug and enthusiastically exchange compliments regarding how well the other looked, and how long it had been since they last met. A number of older women sat in the seats surrounding the registration desks, likely waiting on younger women to bring their registration documents to them. The conference is not exclusive to NTCG women, women from sister churches like Church of God of Prophecy and New Testament Assembly also attend. A number of exhibitor stands were being set up, pastor and scholar Joe Aldred had a stand promoting his books. The exhibitors' products included hats, embroidered hand towels, clothes, books and bibles, perfumes and gospel music. The Friday evening service began at 7 o'clock with the worship team and musicians leading the singing of medleys of worship songs which were projected onto screens, many of the songs were well known to the congregants and the room was soon filled with the sound of just over a thousand ladies singing with gusto.

The majority of the women present were Black, but there was a few women from the Indian subcontinent and a handful of white women. A number of males were also in attendance. The musicians were all male, a number of the males present were district pastors and pastors. At the conclusion of the singing a board member officially welcomed the congregants which was followed by bible reading and prayer by two pastor's wives followed by a congregational song. Although the worship set had people singing it was the older 'hymnal' songs that had people up clapping and moving in time to the beat. For the older

women this was ‘old time religion’ a reminder of the early church in which they had invested much of their time and material resources. Rose Lyesight was also present at the conference, almost fifty years since she had inaugurated the first women’s conference with a lot fewer women. This was a time when women wore hats and did not wear make-up or jewellery. For many of them these changes were and are difficult and see such changes as the cause of the church not being as powerful as they believe it once was in the time of old time religion. For the younger women particularly those who grew up in the church the older songs mark a sense of belonging to a church and a black organisation where they do not have to explain their ethnicity nor their faith. In this atmosphere they are surrounded by hundreds of women just like them who for a few hours there is a sense of liberty to just be. Many women do not need a book or to look at the words on the screen.

Some glad morning we shall see, Jesus in the air  
Coming after you and me, joy is ours to share  
What rejoicing there will be, when the saints shall rise  
Headed for that jubilee, yonder in the skies

Chorus  
Oh what singing, oh what shouting  
On that happy morning when we all shall rise  
Oh what glory, Hallelujah  
When we meet our blessed Savior in the skies

The conclusion of the song was followed by more greetings and introductions by a women’s board member. The guest singer for the weekend was then introduced, she was a young lady from London who was to ‘minister in song’. Her moving rendition stirred a number of women to stand, to raise hands and or shout hallelujah. When she had finished the song, many women still continued to exclaim ‘praise the Lord’, ‘hallelujah’ or ‘glory’ the women’s ministry director was then brought forward to welcome everyone and introduce the evening speaker.

The evening speaker was Joyceln Barnett an African-American who was flown in especially for the conference. Barnett is an ordained minister in the Church of God

Cleveland, Tennessee and is among the few women who have had the opportunity to preach at the CoG's biennial General Assembly.<sup>737</sup> The conference committee typically brings the main speaker from overseas, mainly America or from outside of Church of God. The speaker would normally be someone who is a well-known 'big name' in northern Pentecostal circles. Well known speakers are thought to attract attendees to the conference and provide a change from the 'home-grown' preachers who most women hear during their district conventions or who are invited as guest preachers to their local church.

Jocelyn's authority to preach is taken for granted. NTCG has permitted women to preach and provides opportunities for them to be licenced ministers. The two ranks of licence open to women are that of exhorter and licenced minister, the third rank of ministry is that of ordained bishop which is currently denied to women. Only ordained Bishops can vote at the general council and only Bishops can be elected to the executive council of the national and international church. The general council is comprised of the ordained Bishops in the Church of God. Members of the general council have voting rights in the general meeting of Church of God. NTCG's official stance on women in leadership is for the most part in line with that of the Church of God Cleveland Tennessee. However since the 1970's it was not uncommon for women to pastor churches, although these churches have tended to be small - less than 30 members. Once assigned, female pastors are rarely promoted to larger or prominent congregations. However, all male pastors do not get promoted and can remain at a congregation for a long time, sometimes for the whole of their ministerial career. NTCG has no prohibition against women preaching, as stated above some women have been appointed as pastors over congregations and so preach every week. While others are ministers within congregations and may occasionally preach.

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<sup>737</sup> Church of God General Assembly, 2014. <http://www.daystar.com/ondemand/video/?video=3726545975001> [accessed March 26 2016]

Saturday consisted of a prayer meeting, followed by workshops on various topics related to the main theme the 'Connected to the Word' (see Appendix.2) and culminated in a service with a similar format to Friday. The inclusion of a 'School of Ministry' and 'workshops' indicates that there is an emphasis not only on preaching but teaching the word. The School of Ministry consisted of two one hour sessions on the Saturday and Sunday morning similar to a plenary session. Reverend Mrs Bradshaw was invited as the guest teacher. Although not from NTCG she is senior pastor of New Life Assembly, a Fellowship of Pentecostal churches. Bradshaw has a M.Th. in Applied Theology and is pursuing a doctoral degree at Spurgeon's College in London. Her theme for the two sessions was 'Abundant Life in the Word'. Her style was didactic and she did not raise her voice in the style often associated with Pentecostal preachers and preaching. She entertained questions at the end of the session.

The fact that Reverend Bradshaw holds a Masters degree indicates a greater acceptance of the place of higher education within Pentecostal church. It also points to the development of Pentecostal adherents who were once regarded as poor and barely literate relying on the Spirit and experience. The importance placed on higher education is further demonstrated in the credentials of the workshop leaders of whom five of the seven had at least first degrees. Where stated these were in Managerial and Administrative Studies, Social Science and Ministry. Of these, three had a Masters degree and one was a solicitor. Where their degrees weren't mentioned, one stated they worked as the manager of a community nursery, while the other worked for Shell training staff all over the world. Not only is there a shift in the attitude to education, but within in two generations immigrants who were for the most part denied access to well positioned employment and discriminated against in education have managed to navigate the systems to gain the academic credentials. Cheryl



Gilkes makes the same observation among women in the Sanctified Church, she remarks that higher education and work were means of achieving upward mobility.<sup>738</sup>

The fact that their attainment were stated in the program is an indication of the value placed on higher education. One thing that is apparent is, despite being highly qualified these women where they tend to serve in their churches do not do justice to their degree status. They serve in single adult's ministry, as a youth leader, an evangelism team member, family training hour president and member of the ladies board only one was a Director of Evangelism for four churches (a district). From my own observations one of the reason for this may be that lay leadership positions are often given to males despite the fact they may not be as academically accomplished as women. The vast majority of pastors in NTCG are males and knowingly or unknowingly mentor and promote young men over ladies. Another reason could lie in that professional married women are already juggling multiple roles and feel a sense of obligation to be involved in the church particularly if the church is small. Rather than taking a leadership position they would take the position of a team member so as to be involved in ministry without having full responsibility. One of the ladies in the focus groups related how her pastor had encouraged her to enter pastoral ministry but she decided to concentrate on her family instead. This is a dilemma that women face in the church and outside the church, is it possible to be a professional and or leader and also have a family? Some women make the decision to pursue one or the other while yet others try to juggle both roles.

In chapter seven I expand on the role of the Bible as it pertains to spirituality nonetheless as the theme of the conference was 'Connected to the Word' it is apt that a few words be included here. As indicated above seven workshops were conducted on Saturday.

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<sup>738</sup> Gilkes, *If It Wasn't for the Women*, 44,

All the workshops revolved around the theme of the conference. “Connected to the Word – not of the World” was a programme designed for the children. It was said to,

[help children] to understand that the Word of God is powerful and has an impact upon every life choice they make. They will be helped to understand that connection to the Word is much more beneficial than connecting to the World.

The provision of child care points to the presence of single mothers or families without relatives to care for children over the three days. A programme for children would give these parents a break and a chance to focus on the services. Further, it indicates the importance the church places on children having access to applicable biblical teaching. This is a development as from my observation during the early days of NTCG children were the responsibility of their parents throughout the conference and provision was not made for them. Children were expected to sit quietly and behave through the services. The themes of the other workshops were ‘Hide the Word’ targeting 13-17 year olds, ‘“It’s Precious – Hide it”’ for 18 – 24 year olds, ‘Sexuality and the Word’ 25+, ‘Connected to Succeed in Education and Business’, and ‘Kingdom Connection’. The workshops which focused on education, business and success is a move away from the typical Caribbean Pentecostal theme to what I would say a more African Pentecostal theme. Humility, piety and heaven have been dominant themes of the Caribbean church. The pursuit of success was not generally encouraged as promotion comes from God, in God’s time. African –Caribbean Pentecostals were encouraged to do their best and wait on God whether it be for good exam results, a better job or a husband. This workshop does mark a move away from purely biblical and or spiritually themed workshops.

On the Sunday morning the conference centre was almost filled with very well women dressed, many still wore hats though the vast majority did not. The tradition of covering the head stems from Paul’s admonition in 1 Corinthians 11:16 in which women are directed to cover their hair when praying or prophesying. In the early days of Church of God this was

understood literally and for many women particularly the older members, this is still the case. I have seen women not attend service because they did not have a hat or scarf to cover their head. I have not been privy to debates on this issue in recent years. Of the second generation women some still do wear hats but I think this is more as tradition and fashion and because of a biblical mandate. Judging from youth conventions still less if any of third generation women and girls wear a covering unless it is as a fashion statement. The Women's Director, Mrs Brown, was the speaker for the Sunday morning session. Mrs Brown shared with the congregation that preaching was not a role she was comfortable in. She did not think of herself as a preacher but her board felt that she should speak and the Lord had given her a word for those present.

I understand the conference as a celebration of Pentecostal womanhood. Although it is overseen by the Executive Bishop of Church of God the Women's Director and her board are free to plan the conference as they see fit. It is not only a time for worship but a time where social and health issues can be discussed. In the past issues such as lupus, sickle cell anaemia and depression have been discussed. Awards are conferred and the efforts of women are recognised. From 1960 when the first Ladies Willing Workers Band was organized in Handsworth Birmingham women have been supporting the church. Ira Brooks refers to the Ladies Band in Leeds organising 'two more fundraising projects'. Presently the department has purchased a property to temporarily house and support vulnerable women. Under the acronym SHAPE , Supporting and Helping young women Achieve Potential through Education. This project has been funded by the women of the church.

## **Research**

I decided to recruit a sample from the Empowerment Conference and conduct the focus groups there also. Miles, Huberman and Saldaña make the point that qualitative

research requires the setting of boundaries, which include defining those aspects of a study which can be explored within the time and means available. Pragmatically the conference presented a perfect venue/context for recruitment, for a number of reasons: Logistics – the conference normally attracted over six thousand Black British Pentecostal women over three days. As such potential participants would be together in one place, there would be no need to contact individual churches and then wait for responses. There would be no need for phone calls or advertising on the media which often yields low results, additionally such processes would involve more time and financial investment. The Empowerment Conference presented a context where discussions regarding spirituality would normally occur. Flick states if the researcher is interested in the way people communicate about a specific issue sample settings should be identified where such discussion takes place.

The Empowerment Conference attendees were ideally suited to the purpose of the study. Barbour notes the aim in focus groups is not statistical representation but rather the sampling is driven by the purpose of the study. A purposive sample has the capacity to generate talk in order to extend thinking about the topic. Additionally, participants chosen from the conference would demonstrate intra-group homogeneity. This occurs when there is homogeneity but yet variation which would occur between church groups as well as through variations in the population in terms of for example age, length of time ‘saved’ and occupations. Such variation facilitates rapport among the group and to an extent mitigates against getting side tracked on issues which diverge from gaining an in-depth understanding of the central theme. Finally, I knew the Conference gatekeeper personally therefore gaining access to conduct the study would be relatively straightforward.

Permission to recruit participants from the Empowerment Conference was made by approaching the gatekeeper, the Women’s Ministry Director. In monocratic organizations, states Wolff, usually only permission from ‘senior management’ is needed, in some

instances this is made difficult if for instance there has been a change in management or if the organization is recovering from a scandal. Access to the gatekeeper was relatively easy as I was an insider. I made an appointment to have a meeting with her on my next visit to the UK at the denomination's headquarters. During the meeting I explained my research interest and requested permission to conduct a focus-group study during the conference. She was more than willing to give me access and was very supportive of the study. This was demonstrated by her willingness to facilitate the process by allocating a room to carry out the focus-group discussions and her suggesting and sanctioning the distribution of interest information sheets by the conference ushers. Focus group work is often dependent on gatekeepers which has implications as far as access and recruitment is concerned. Gatekeepers may screen potential participants – (this was not the case for the empowerment conference)

**Recruiting the focus group participants.** The NTCG's Women's Empowerment Conference 2010, took place at the Bethel Conference Centre on the 2 and 3 October. As expected there were over 2000 women registered. The vast majority of the conference attendees would have met the criteria for participation in the focus group. With such a large group of women, it was anticipated that diversity within the sample was also possible. Due to the number of women at the conference the plan was to choose purposive random sample in which there was maximum variation sampling i.e. making a choice from a wide range of choices to get variation of respondents and perspectives. The logic of this variation, states Patton, is that any common features that emerge out of the variation is of particular interest. Further, the credibility of systematic randomly selected participants adds another layer of credibility, in that it reduces suspicion about why one participant was chosen over another. Miles and Huberman suggest random purposeful sampling when purposeful sampling produces too many potential participants, such in this case.

To that end, the first 500 women were given an interest information sheet by the ushers. The sheet provided a general outline of the study along with a tear-off slip to be completed with name and contact details. Once completed, the slips were to be placed in a box close to the exit/entrance by 10am the next day (Saturday). The women were reminded about the form and the research study by the moderator of the evening session. Just before the session concluded during the Friday evening session, I was asked to come to the front to encourage the women to participate. Although it was anticipated that not all 500 women who had received an information sheet would want to take part in the study, I did think that I would get at least sufficient interest to choose *nth* reply slip.

The next day there were only two slips in the box!! Undeterred I decided not to lose the opportunity, my assistant went around asking women if they would be interested in taking part in the study, and from that invitation seven women agreed to participate. I held the discussion that afternoon. That evening I met three women going to my hotel, and after I had told them about the study, they also agreed to participate. I conducted a group discussion that evening. This mode of recruitment is an example of a convenience sample which Patton describes as ‘those cases easiest to access under given conditions’. Although convenience samples are in Flick’s view the second best choice and should not be used as a sampling plan, in situations where there are problems in applying a more direct plan such a plan can be applied, but not because it is an easy and convenient mode of recruitment. I arranged to meet on the Sunday with the two women who had put their names in the box. I thanked them for responding and requested they bring along with them more ladies to the discussion that was to take place that afternoon. They did bring others, ‘snowballing’ the group from two to nine women. Snowballing occurs when respondents who are thought to be information rich are asked to bring others along like them.

I was able to conduct three discussions at the conference. The smallest focus group consisted of three people and the largest was nine. Barbour notes that although market researchers suggest groups should be made up of 8-10, she argues that this number is too large for sociological studies. In her edited volume the contributors work with groups of five or six and some with as few as three.<sup>739</sup>

### **6.1.5. Sampling Plan for Individual Churches**

#### **6.1.5.1. Access and Recruitment**

I contacted two female pastors and two women's ministry directors who were known to me. I discussed the study with them and they agreed to participate and to recruit others. I sent them each a copy of the research information sheet (appendix 2). The two pastors were from Community Revival and New Harvest Church and the women's ministry directors were from NTCG. I included the women from Community Revival and New Harvest Church, to introduce diversity in terms of Pentecostal churches.<sup>740</sup> These churches were chosen because the leaders had access to preexisting groups of people who were suited to the investigation, a purposive sample. As a pre-existing group it was a network where discussion already occurs. Such a 'naturally occurring' group is a context where ideas are formed and decisions made.

Although there were many other churches that fulfilled this criteria my insider relationship with gatekeepers was a deciding factor. The pastors and the women's ministry directors were gatekeepers who had the power to grant access to the groups of people needed for the study.<sup>741</sup> Additionally they themselves were BBPW and had access to others like themselves; they were therefore strategic contacts.<sup>742</sup> I informed the leaders that in recruiting

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<sup>739</sup> *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, edited by Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger, 113–126. London: Sage Publications, 1999.

<sup>740</sup> Flick, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 31; Rosaline Barbour, *Doing Focus Groups*, 61.

<sup>741</sup> Vaughn, Sinagub, and Schumm, *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology*, 65.

<sup>742</sup> Vaughn, Sinagub, and Schumm, *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology*, 65.

the group should consist of no fewer than four and no more than ten women.<sup>743</sup> The four leaders not only arranged for the participants to attend but also provided a venue where the focus group could take place.

As women's ministry directors they were able to take advantage of their midweek women's meeting day to allow me to conduct the focus groups. The women's meetings were open to all the women in the church, however a special announcement given that I was coming to do a study so the women were encouraged to come the meeting. The women who came to the group were minimally screen

The pastors probably screened using criteria which may have included calling women with whom they were comfortable with and or would give a good impression of the pastor and or the church. Additionally they may have called people who they thought would be available on the assigned day. Barbour points out that unlike interviews where the facilitator can work with the participants schedule and meet at their home if necessary, focus groups involve the coordinating of a common venue and time for a number of people.<sup>744</sup>

As a result of the directors and pastors recruitment four groups were formed. Focus groups 4 and 5 took place on 8 and 9 October 2012. Focus group 4 comprised women from New Harvest and group 5 women from an NTCG in the West Midlands. Focus groups 6, 7 and 8 took place on 8, 10, and 14 October 2013. Focus group 6 was with women from Community Revival Fellowship and the remaining two groups were from East Midland NTCG churches.

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<sup>743</sup> Even though ten people is considered large, allowance was being made for people who may drop out at the last minute.

<sup>744</sup> Barbour and Kitzinger, 'The Challenge and Promise of Focus Groups,' 10.



## 6.2. The Participants

In total forty of the participants were members of NTCG who attended churches across northern and southern England, the Midlands and London. Four participants were members of Community Revival Centre and eight were members of New Harvest Church.<sup>745</sup>

The ages of participants ranged as follows:

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| 18–28 years                             | – six      |
| 29–39 years                             | – nine     |
| 40–50 years                             | – fourteen |
| 51–60 years                             | – thirteen |
| 61+                                     | – nine     |
| 2 participants did not give their ages. |            |

All the participants self-identified as attending churches that are categorised as BMC.

The women indicated their occupations as social worker, senior health carer, banker, visual merchandiser / sales assistant, telesales representative, support worker, student, customer service, accountant, registered general nurse, senior management – local government, PA/business support manager, occupational health advisor, nursing assistant, child-minder, local government officer, housewife, graduate, prison chaplain, administrative assistant, unemployed, midwife, volunteer, chef, caterer, learning support assistant, community care worker, mother, housewife, trainee nail technician, teaching assistant, community development worker, support worker, teacher, homemaker/self-employed and retired.

Thirty-four of the participants had been Christian for 10 years or more, four for 7–10 years; five for 4–6 years, three for 1–3 years, and three for less than a year; three participants did not respond. Forty-eight of the fifty-two focus group participants were of African-Caribbean descent.<sup>746</sup> Numbers attending the groups were as follows:

Group 1: 7  
Group 2: 3

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<sup>745</sup> Six of the focus groups were from NTCG the remaining two were not.

<sup>746</sup> One of the participants were of Anglo decent. The information sheet did not require participants to indicate ethnicity.

Group 3: 9  
Group 4: 5  
Group 5: 4  
Group 6: 10  
Group 7: 8  
Group 8: 6

### **6.3. The Sessions**

#### **6.3.1. Empowerment Conference**

In each case I arrived at the rooms to set up the refreshments, test the recorders and discuss any details with my assistant. I provided light refreshments for the participants. As the participants arrived, they were given an information packet which consisted of a typed outline of the study (appendix 2a), a consent form and personal information form/survey, both of which were to be completed by the participant and returned to the assistant (appendix 2b and 2c).

The focus group began with the researcher welcoming and thanking the participants for taking part in the study. This was followed by the researcher reading out the ‘nature of the study’ sheet (appendix 2a), which the participants were invited to take away with them. Prospective participants were then given the opportunity to withdraw from the group or, if they chose to continue, to complete the consent form and survey. While all the participants chose to stay, in focus groups 3, a participant was not sure she wanted to take part but also did not want to leave – that participant said nothing for the first part of the session but then relaxed and took part; she signed her consent form at the close of the discussion.

A semi-structured question guide was used to navigate the discussion (appendix 4). The first question required the participants to share their coming-to-faith experience. The stories they shared ‘broke the ice’ and provided a point of commonality for the participants. Focus groups 1–3 were conducted during the lunch breaks and in the evening at the women’s conference. The lunch breaks were limited and I had indicated that the sessions would take

around an hour. Once I had completed the preliminary introductions and taken care of the ethical considerations, around forty-five minutes remained for discussion. Given the number of people who took part in the sessions and the time constraints, not much time was left for each person to speak or for the discussion to develop.

### **6.3.2. Individual Churches**

The NTCG discussions were conducted in the one of the rooms in the church building where the participants worshipped. The Community Revival focus group was conducted in an industrial unit leased by one of the participants for her business, and the New Harvest was conducted at the office of one of the participants. I arrived early at the rooms or venue to set up the refreshments, test the recorders and discuss any details with my assistant and to meet with the gatekeeper where necessary. I provided light refreshments for the participants. Each participant was given information about the study, preliminaries were carried out as for the Empowerment Conference. In keeping with the process of the Empowerment Conference a semi-structured question guide (appendix 4) was used to navigate the discussion. A significant change was the introductory question. Although the responses in the initial focus groups were interesting and provided some rich material on conversion the responses took too long; this was particularly the case with the large groups. Therefore, following session 3 I decided to change the initial question to a closed question, “how long have you been part of a Pentecostal church?”<sup>747</sup> This change left more time to focus on the topic of spirituality.

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<sup>747</sup> The objective of the initial question to relax the group thereby providing a basis to gently explore their understanding of spirituality. It was anticipated that the introduction would take ten minutes (even less with the smaller focus group) however the conversion stories took up approximately half of the time. Many of the stories commenced with reference to the religious traditions of their parents; most were brought up in homes where at least one parent or guardian was a Christian. For the most part the women’s parents were Pentecostal; only in a couple of cases were they from non-Pentecostal backgrounds. Fewer women were unchurched and a very small number did not mention their parent’s religious tradition at all. Taking into account the length of time the introductions took in the initial three interviews the researcher decided to begin subsequent interviews by asking closed questions specifically to introduce themselves and how long have you been part of a Pentecostal church. These questions were followed by questions which would allow exploration of the research topic.

### 6.3.3. Reflections and Observations

The Empowerment Conference was an excellent venue to recruit participants for the study, however the first attempt yielded only two participants, the lack of interest could be because a general invitation rather than a personal one was given. Further, the reason the women were present was primarily to attend a national event, not to take part in a study. Krueger observes that in getting participants to attend discussions the invitations should be personalised and although Krueger refers to written invitation in this case a verbal invitation may have made a difference.<sup>748</sup> He further observes that researchers should not conduct discussion during major events and in NTCG terms this was a major event.

Focus group 1 and 2 were both convenience samples a sampling method which Patton is primarily against stating that this sampling method is neither purposive nor strategic.<sup>749</sup>

Although I agree that the participants who were a part of the focus group self-selected, the pool from which the sample was drawn was purposive and strategic and not random people from the street. Morse suggests that a convenience sample can be adopted as an initial plan which should be followed up with purposive samples. Although it was not the original intention, these initial focus groups helped to identify the trajectory and scope of the overall study, which is in Morse's view the purpose of an initial convenience sample.<sup>750</sup> Patton's view of convenience sampling is as an approach that is *ad hoc*, a quick and easy method to obtain data, whereas Morse's approach is of a more directed sample. Morse takes the view that if for example, researcher is investigating the learning habits of nine year old children, a school would be an obvious place to recruit, alternatively for people's view of sports a

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<sup>748</sup> Krueger, Focus Groups, 98, Lia Litosseliti, *Using Focus Groups in Research*. London: Continuum, 2003. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost (accessed June 16, 2015), 39.

<sup>749</sup> Michael Patton Quinn, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, (California:Sage, 2015), 309.

<sup>750</sup> Linda Morse, 'Sampling in Grounded Theory' in *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory*, ed. Anthony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz (London:Sage, 2007), 235.

sampling from a sports club would make sense. It is in this vein that Nick Emmel argues for a 'realist sampling strategy'

...purposive work does not preclude opportunistic or pragmatic sampling. Researchers are often faced with opportunities in their field work to choose a person, organisation, or object to be sampled. These choices are made with direct reference to the purposive work.<sup>751</sup>

My original intention was to constitute a purposive sample which given the pool would have been ideal, but due to the lack of volunteers this was not possible. On reflection I believe a purposive sample could have been assembled had more attention been paid to method of recruitment. More attention could have been given to personally inviting women to take part, perhaps with incentives or having them sign up and also incorporate snowballing intentionally. This perhaps would have yielded more volunteers for participation as rarely do women attend such conferences alone they usually come as part of the church women's group. This was exemplified in that the three groups conducted at the conference, were made up of mainly 'groups within the group'. These 'micro-groups' were comprised of participants who either belonged to the same church or were friends, I became aware of this as the discussion ensued. In each of the three groups there was one participant who did not belong to a 'micro group' but because she was a Pentecostal and belonged to NTCG there was a sense of belonging. The individual church groups comprised people from the same church. Participants' being familiar with each other made conversation easier and as far as I could tell the discussions were smooth; I was not aware of relational difficulties or hurt feelings. My lack of awareness does not necessarily mean that those dynamics were absent, however.

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<sup>751</sup> Nick Emmel, *Sampling and Choosing Cases in Qualitative Research: A Realist Approach*, (London: Sage, 2013), 80.

On reflection, I recognise that within the ‘micro-groups’ the possibility of disagreement or the betrayal of a confidence was always present, which could have had a negative impact on a relationship after the session had concluded and I had moved on with my research.<sup>752</sup> This possibility is perhaps greater in the church context, where official and unofficial hierarchies or power play may exist. In one of the focus groups, the pastor (female) of some of the participants took part in the discussion. In the individual church focus groups two groups were attended by the pastors’ wives. The inclusion of women with these roles had the potential to help or hinder the discussion for both parties and or the researcher. Barbour and Kitzinger cite an example of someone who was not in the focus group but turned up because she was a chaperone of one of the participants. The members of the focus group, which comprised young Indian women discussing reproductive issues, were reluctant to talk until an older woman, the mother-in-law of one of the young women, began talking which had the effect of opening up the discussion.<sup>753</sup> Barbour and Kitzinger make the point that although textbooks on conducting focus groups highlight the power of the researcher in composing an ideal focus group, ‘the precise composition of groups will often be a product of circumstance rather than planning’ as was the case at the Empowerment conference.<sup>754</sup>

#### **6.4. Qualitative Data Analysis**

Unlike quantitative data analysis, which has standardised methods to analyse data, qualitative data analysis lacks standardization. The heuristic method of inductive reasoning is applied to the data.<sup>755</sup> The discussions conducted in the focus groups are the primary data and as such

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<sup>752</sup> Barbour, *Doing Focus Groups*, 67.

<sup>753</sup> Barbour and Kitzinger, ‘The Challenge and Promise of Focus Groups,’ 8.

<sup>754</sup> Barbour and Kitzinger, ‘The Challenge and Promise of Focus Groups,’ 8.

<sup>755</sup> Johnny Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 93.

are the basis for observation and interpretation; what is observed and how it is interpreted is largely influenced by the research topic.<sup>756</sup> I personally transcribed all the recordings, which consisted of ten to twelve hours of audio. All the participants in the study were assigned pseudonyms and where necessary references to places or individuals were changed to preserve confidentiality. As I transcribed, I was immersed in the data. The process of transcription provided the initial stage of immersion and interpretation of data. I wrote out my research concern *to explicate the features of a BBPW's spirituality*, which helped me to focus on and identify relevant text – and not just interesting stories – for inclusion in the analysis.<sup>757</sup> After transcribing I read and re-read the transcription. As I read the transcriptions, I was able to identify recurrent themes in the texts. These themes became the basis of the analysis.

#### **6.4.1. Coding and Thematic Links**

Coding of transcriptions is a useful process in the analysis of data. A code in qualitative data analysis can be a word or short phrase assigned to a phrase or thought. The code ‘symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data’.<sup>758</sup> To recap, the overall objective, to translate the women’s God-talk into the research concern, is accomplished in four steps (figure 3).<sup>759</sup> First, the data transcriptions were read and reread, with that reading and rereading providing further immersion, engendering familiarity with the data. Second, the data was classified with words or phrases to represent summative, salient or essential aspects of each statement. I identified reoccurring ideas/themes as presented by the participants in the focus groups and assigned the

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<sup>756</sup> Morgan, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, 31.

<sup>757</sup> Carl F Auerbach and Louise B Silverstein, *Qualitative Data: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis* (New York: NYU Press, 2003), 44.

<sup>758</sup> Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*, 95.

<sup>759</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 161-162.

code. The third part of the process, required the codes be grouped under more general themes, which were given titles that identified the content in relation to the research concern. Finally, the themes were placed in a superordinate and subordinate hierarchy. The categories were not predetermined but arose out of the focus groups. The themes presented below appeared in at least four of the sessions. Such reoccurrence highlights the importance of these themes to participants and to the study.

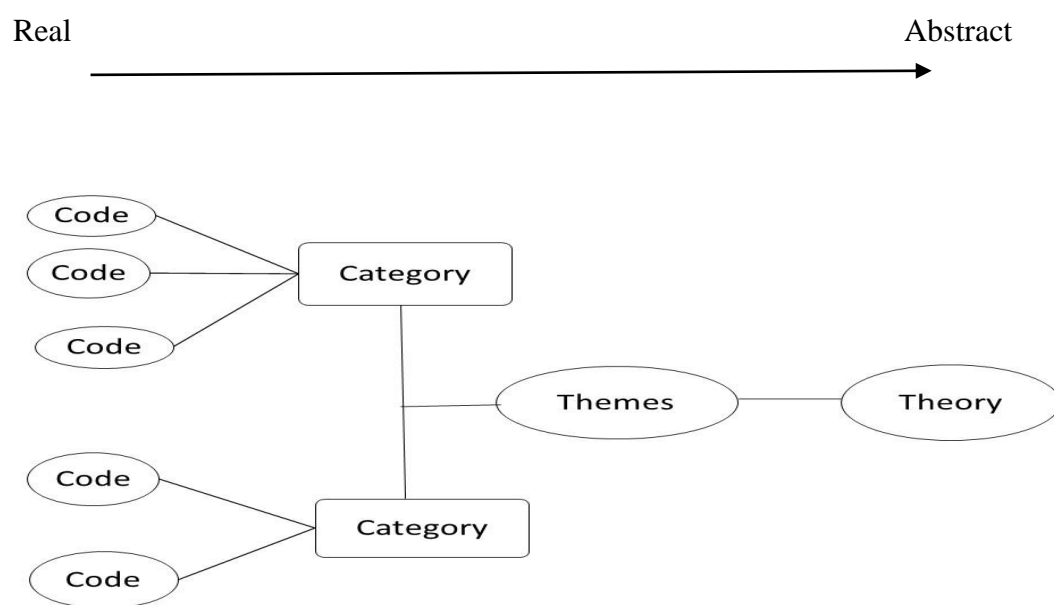


Figure 3: Basic codes-to-theory model for qualitative analysis<sup>760</sup>

## 6.5. Findings

This section is organised under broad headings which reflect recurring themes that emerged from the data. The themes summarise the manifest (apparent) and latent (underlying) meanings of the data. In using the phrases ‘Pentecostal spirituality is...’ (i.e. manifest or apparent meaning) or ‘Pentecostal spirituality means...’ (i.e. latent or underlying meanings),

<sup>760</sup> Diagram used and adapted from Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, p.12



the themes interpret what is happening. The themes are presented below in superordinate and subordinate categories.<sup>761</sup>

1. **Pentecostal Spirituality is BBPW's way of being**
  - a. means supernatural/natural
  - b. means relational encounter vs rules
2. **Pentecostal Spirituality has key elements**
  - a. Conversion
  - b. Relationship and Growth
3. **Pentecostal Spirituality is the noise of joy**
  - a. Expressed in worship
  - b. Expressed in the Holy Spirit
  - c. Expressed in lived experience

#### **6.5.1. Pentecostal Spirituality is BBPW's Way of Being**

When participants were asked what they understood by spirituality, there was usually a pause as the participants took a moment to think about the question. Many participants did not respond but listened instead to their fellow participants. Only one said she did not know.

I intentionally asked the participants about what they understood by spirituality both directly and indirectly. It can be persuasively argued that 'spirituality' is an etic term and should have been operationalised. In her study to identify African American women's definition of spirituality and religiosity, however, and from a number of other research studies, Mattis concluded the women in her study make complex distinctions between the two concepts.<sup>762</sup> Both are said to have an influence on African Americans' understanding of

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<sup>761</sup> Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*, 108. The selected responses reflect the recurring themes and as such only material which reflect themes are included. Verbatim quotes are included where they connect my analysis with the experiences and reflections of the participants. The inclusion of verbatim quotes is intentional because as far as possible I aim to present the experiences and beliefs of the women in their own words and according to the themes that emerged from my analysis of the sessions.

<sup>762</sup> Mattis, 'African American Women's Definitions of Spirituality and Religiosity,' 101.

forgiveness, liberation, hope and purpose of life. In fact spirituality and religiosity effect almost every domain of life.<sup>763</sup> As state above Holmes, Schneiders and others have observed that spirituality is no longer limited to the domain of the church but has widespread appeal, even though that appeal may not be to a transcendent being.<sup>764</sup>

I argue that spirituality has common currency and is both emic and etic. A direct question about spirituality was therefore worth asking. This position is supported by Yin, who states that there can be multiple interpretations of the same event.<sup>765</sup> It should not be taken for granted that spirituality carries the same meaning for the researcher as for each participant. This study seeks to capture meaning from the participants' points of view. Emic and etic can identify a potential 'duality if not multiplicity of meanings'. I was careful in the focus groups not to lead the participants nor to impose my own etic on their own emic. I would encourage them by stating, 'I want to know what you think'. Astley states that in the development of an individual ordinary theology, when people are asked what they believe, they should be pressed as to what they mean by what they say.<sup>766</sup> There could well be differences in meaning as a result of value systems, predispositions, gender, age, race and ethnicity.<sup>767</sup> Yin claims that for those who do qualitative research, multiple interpretations of the same event are an opportunity rather than a constraint.<sup>768</sup>

For those participants who offered an answer to my question about spirituality, the responses followed two lines of reasoning: (1) supernatural/natural understanding, and (2) relational encounter. Although only a few respondents were able to articulate what

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<sup>763</sup> Mattis, 'African American Women's Definitions of Spirituality and Religiosity,' 102.

<sup>764</sup> Holmes, 'Spirituality: Some Disciplinary Perspectives,' 23; Schneiders, 'Spirituality in the Academy,' 15.

<sup>765</sup> Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, 11.

<sup>766</sup> Astley and Francis, *Exploring Ordinary Theology*, 6.

<sup>767</sup> Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, 12.

<sup>768</sup> Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, 13.

Pentecostal spirituality is, more participants were able to identify the components of a Pentecostal spirituality.

### ***Supernatural/natural***

In this understanding, spirituality is the interface between the physical (natural) and the spiritual (supernatural):

**JANET:** *What does spirituality mean to me? [MARCIA: to you yea, there's no right or wrong]. When you initially think of the word spirituality, it not in the natural it's talking about – not in the natural. We know that God is a spirit and we know that's how we connect with God and we know that the way that we live and the way we have to be in connection with him is through the spirit.*<sup>769</sup>

**CLARA:** *[S]piritual is a parallel to our natural, does that make sense? [There is] what you see, what you feel and then there is what has been ordered through Christ or through God that is the natural order of things, that is higher than us. Spirituality for me would be to understand more of who God is, what God's purpose for me what God has ordered, what God has said about the situation. Natural disasters – that's the physical but what is the actual spiritual that is happening.*<sup>770</sup>

**JESSICA:** *When we look at it we are living in two worlds, we live in the natural world and we live in spiritual world, supernatural, so when we have that encounter with God or pray you have a supernatural experience with the Lord. So that spirituality is very important especially when you are in prayer or when you read. When God gives you a rhema word that brings the spirituality alive in the natural world so it is a spirituality.*<sup>771</sup>

### ***Relational Encounter***

Having a personal encounter with God was also understood as spirituality, and not as just following rules of the Pentecostal church. Hester grew up in the church, left for a while and then returned. She remembers that in the early days of the COG in Britain there was a lot of emphasis on sanctification and that the 'inner person' should not be 'messed up'. She quoted from Romans 12:1, how the body was a living sacrifice and to be used for worship; she remembered the impact that the teaching had on her as a young girl. Loretta, who grew up in

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<sup>769</sup> Focus Group 2, 2 October 2010.

<sup>770</sup> Focus Group 1, 2 October 2010.

<sup>771</sup> Focus Group 5, 18 September 2012.

a Pentecostal church and became a Christian at the age of ten but left the Black Pentecostal church, remembered that the first time she put on a pair of jeans, she was frightened because she was thought she would be struck down, such was the emphasis on what these women called spirituality.<sup>772</sup> The observance of rules and regulations can seem to non- Pentecostals as brainwashing, commented Pam, it can see as people just following and not thinking for themselves.

*They [the church] say to me every Wednesday [to] fast, I was just following, I sang on the choir, no eating on Sunday morning, I was just following. ... but I think we were forced to do things which came across as spiritual or being brainwashed.*<sup>773</sup>

She came to the realisation that a personal encounter with God makes the difference. Personal encounter as opposed to following rules was one of the differences that Carlie observed between the Black Pentecostal church and the White Pentecostal church: the Black Pentecostal church was all about dress, 'it ... felt that your spirituality was based on how you dressed [this determined], how close you were to the Lord, the white church was much more laid back ... people would come in their shorts and in their Jesus sandals ...of course jewellery'.<sup>774</sup> Later in the session she continued by saying that it is the relationship with God that helps people overcome and a direct relationship with the Holy Spirit would fill the void.<sup>775</sup> Ella, who was 'saved' pre-teen and had gone through a difficult divorce, supported the theme of relationship with God, citing the fact that the difficult time had taken her relationship with God to a different level. Mary was depressed and about to 'go off her head' when God connected with her through the message that the preacher brought that particular

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<sup>772</sup> Loretta, Focus Group 7, 10 October 2013.

<sup>773</sup> Pam, Focus Group 5, September 18, 2012.

<sup>774</sup> Carlie, Focus Group 7, 10 October 2013.

<sup>775</sup> Carlie, Focus Group 7, 10 October 2013.

Sunday. Hester was quite definite there is such a thing as a Pentecostal spirituality but that defining it was difficult.

***HESTER:** It's so difficult to define because it's a mixture of different things I think that make a cocktail, how would you say a Methodist or Anglican there is not carbon copy that, there is no set thing in stone because we are all individuals and because of that everybody has their way of connecting it's so difficult to say but what I will say is that spiritualism for me growing up was – that's where I connected as a child it was the family, it was the community but as I got older it was a deep sense of spirituality in connection with the Lord and through Pentecostalism I gained such.....you know being around that doctrine I grew, I grew, it's difficult to define.<sup>776</sup>*

The question of what was important to their spirituality as BBPW caused a lot of dialogue and was emotive particularly in focus group 3. It was evident from the discussions that the women were talking from personal experience and not religious ritual.<sup>777</sup> One woman observably and audibly 'felt the Spirit'; another was moved to tears by what she shared. This aspect of the discussion had such an impact that after the conclusion of the discussion some of the participants met up and talked at length about the subject of spirituality and its importance.

Hester refers to Pentecostal spirituality as like a 'cocktail', which, to continue the analogy, has a number of 'ingredients'. In four or more of the focus groups, conversion, relationship and growth, and Bible and prayer were said to be important elements of spirituality, and it is these that I outline below. Although other elements were also mentioned in the different groups, including worship, gifts of the Spirit, and attending church, for the purpose of empirical study I have chosen to focus on those themes that occurred the most often across the focus groups.

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<sup>776</sup> Focus Group 8 – 14 October 2013.

<sup>777</sup> Zinbauer argues that spirituality and religiosity are overlapping concepts, however Mattis argues that for African American women they are distinct.

## 6.5.2. Key Elements

### 6.5.2.1. Conversion

The initial step is conversion, which is making a decision to be a Christian. For the women it was clear that there was a distinction between attending church and ‘being *in* church’, being in church means you are a Christian. For young people the temptations associated with partying and relationships were very real. In focus group one four of the seven succumbed to these temptations and left the church, although they returned in later years, while others stayed but did not make a commitment to Christianity until later in their teens. The influence of the church’s teachings along with key people, particularly mothers and grandmothers, seems to have been potent and a common factor in the women’s testimonies. This is expanded upon in the following section.

#### 6.5.2.1.1. Early Influences

Forty-seven of the fifty-two participants recalled going to church to greater or lesser degrees as children.

**PATRICE:** *I was brought up in the church. My mother was a strict Christian woman originating from the West Indies. My father wasn’t a Christian whilst I was young ...became a Christian later on in life. I kind of ...we always went to church mum always took us we didn’t have choice and your mother took you it wasn’t because you were forced to go so to speak but you know, you know your mum....*<sup>778</sup>

**GERALDINE:** *I was brought up in New T my dad’s a minister and my mum was on the missionary board, the catering board, the youth board, this board, that board I’ve always been involved with New T.*<sup>779</sup>

Unlike many participants who were influenced by their mothers, Dana’s adherence to the Pentecostal church came about due to her father,

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<sup>778</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

<sup>779</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

***DANA:** My father used to drink beer quite a lot and it came to a point whereby the family was falling apart and my mother was so tired of working hard for the children being eleven of us she really made sure that my father understood that she was going to leave him if he continued taking beer. So that time my father came across this church the Pentecostal, the Apostolic Faith church the headquarters in America and my father was saved and it was the first time I saw my father crying in tears and he was pleading with God to forgive him for his sins and then I joined him instantly without even knowing what I was exactly doing.<sup>780</sup>*

Although the majority of the participants attended Pentecostal churches during childhood, other church traditions attended were Anglican, Brethren, Baptist, Ethiopian Orthodox, Methodist, Presbyterian and Seventh Day Adventist. Only five participants reported that they did not have a church background; four of them were introduced to Christianity and Pentecostalism by friends, while the other stated that while she was attending a service at a Pentecostal church, the preached word ‘spoke’ directly to her situation and influenced her decision to become a Christian. In all five cases conversion was not instantaneous but occurred over time, usually a matter of months.

#### **6.5.2.1.2. Conversion: Women from a Christian Tradition**

Interestingly, in many instances women who were brought up in a Christian home left the church during their teens and early twenties. The main reason given for their departure was a boyfriend, as is illustrated in following responses:

***CLARA:** I knew no other life[other than the church] until I was able to make a decision for myself as a teenager and as an adult but I grew into a Christian family. I was born into a Christian family and as a teenager wanted to explore [I]went out [and]found the world for myself.<sup>781</sup>*

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<sup>780</sup> Focus Group 5 - 18 September, 2012.

<sup>781</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

**ANGELA:** Basically my own [story] was similar to hers I was grown up into a Christian family I didn't know anything else other than going to church and serve God and things like that. But you know as you grow older being on your own you try to see what out there is like. But I wasn't really like expert out there (laughter) because like even though I was there you have like that scared [feeling], you feel a bit scared and bit timid you know someone is watching you because you don't know otherwise so you know... that was basically it so I just fully [committed] to the church after that.<sup>782</sup>

**BIANCA:** Mine was the same thing I was grown up in a Christian family, Christian home then at the age of eighteen I sort of broke away and doing my own thing having boyfriends after I got married I went back in the church and I'm here still serving the Lord.<sup>783</sup>

**PAT:**... well, we [were] brought up into the church when we come here [to England] we just strayed we didn't go to church. When my mum found out we didn't go to church she was horrified.<sup>784</sup>

These women returned to church in their late teens and middle to late twenties and evidently became members of Pentecostal churches. A number of the participants were clear that while they may have been attending church, they were not professing Christians. The implication being that when they were in an intimate relationships they had not totally backslidden, because they were not they were still going to church, as the following comments demonstrate,

**MC:** How long [did you leave the church for]?

**ANGELA:** Just a few years, not really being out there, because even though I was out there I was still in the church

**MC:** Right, right

**ANGELA:** You know [I] was still in the church

**MC:** You were visiting or you were...?

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<sup>782</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

<sup>783</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

<sup>784</sup> Focus Group 3 - 3 October, 2010



**ANGELA:** *I did go church and praise him and whatever but you still like had you little boyfriend and whatever.*<sup>785</sup>

Although the women may not have considered themselves backslidden, the church would have frowned on the relationship if the boy was not a Christian.

Conversion for the women who did not leave but stayed throughout their childhood and teenage years was similar to that of the women who did not have a church background, – conversion was a gradual process.

**GERALDINE:** *I've always been involved with New T. But growing up one thing about me I knew I wasn't saved and I didn't have any way of letting everyone know I wasn't saved. I was going to church because basically my parents attended this church, I wasn't going to fake it or anything like that I was there every Sunday because I was told to be there and I would sit at the back, sit down through praise and worship and feel no way about it cus I didn't want to be there.*<sup>786</sup>

**MADGE:** *How I resisted Pastor [Name] when he came to the house ...I fought him tooth and nail they had a prayer meeting he was almost begging me [to be saved] and I said no but I was just being stubborn and naughty as a 13 year old.*<sup>787</sup>

**PATRICE:** *As you got older you kind of... back then you didn't have so much of a free choice to make whether you were going to leave church or not, you have to become a little bit rebellious against things before you decided to make your mark in the world. I didn't decide to leave I decided to stay and I suppose some people might question that as being ..... comfortable in what would have appeared to have been a routine for me, it wasn't [because I was] comfortable I enjoyed it, I enjoyed it at a personal level ...I enjoyed the camaraderie, I enjoyed singing, I enjoyed all the activities that we did I enjoyed the socialising I enjoyed going all over the country to go to meetings and meeting my friends there or making new friends but I was young so that's what I thought. But as I got older I paid a little more attention as you do, as you mature you pay a little bit more attention to what's been said and done and you see you pay less attention to what people say and don't do and pay more attention to what they do you get my meaning.... And when you find that people actually do live up to what they are saying it makes [you] a little more inquisitive and I just got a*

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<sup>785</sup> The NTCG has an unwritten line about boy/girl relationships specifically relationships are not encouraged until persons are of marriageable age. The teenage years are pressured for the young people as they will be given more personal latitude by their parent but will be influenced by their peers outside (school, college, work) and within the church (people who perhaps aren't as committed to the church).

<sup>786</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010

<sup>787</sup> Focus Group 3 - 3 October, 2010.

*little bit more inquisitive and made the choice for myself that I would like to serve Christ, because I liked what I saw I liked what I heard I believed it was just a choice I made.*

**MC:** *So what did you believe?*

**PATRICE:** *I believed that he came and he died for us, I believed that we were created in God's image and he sent his Son to die for us so that we may be saved because we were all born in sin I believed that.*<sup>788</sup>

Although some women could pinpoint a particular instance in time when they 'got saved', some referred to baptism as the point of decision. Bernice, however, who was still quite young, was not sure of what she was doing:

**BERNICE:** *I actually got saved and baptised at the age of 8 oooh yea I think there was a baptism at church [Name] New Testament Church in Jamaica and I don't know, I don't know what it was, I don't know if it was like I felt the Holy Spirit, I don't know if it was because I saw everyone else jumping in the pool so I wanted to get in (laughter). I don't know I just found myself... I can remember the day I was like crying and I couldn't stop, even when I went outside I was crying over and over and over again I think I was convicted in that way (reflective)but I'm not sure. I'm not sure what moved me to get baptised but I know it was a good decision because I'm still in the church now. And even though I'm only young, even though you do step outside or in the past you do this and that and you'll go home and you'll say ok as a Christian I know I shouldn't have gone out I know I shouldn't have done that but He still got me here, I'm still here still saved still glorifying God.*<sup>789</sup>

On reflection Bernice was uncertain what she was getting into, unlike Louise, who knew baptism was a turning point in her life:

**LOUISE:** *When I got saved I was very young, but I was a rebel also but there was teacher who ke[pt] on pushing me to pray and she carr[ied] on she push[ing] me so my life becomes a prayer life there's obstacle along the way and when I baptise in the river where so many... all the friends them and everybody were there and all who I used to mess around with I said no more this is the way for me and the Lord start to excel [me]from one extreme to another.*<sup>790</sup>

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<sup>788</sup> Focus Group 2 - 2 October, 2010.

<sup>789</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

<sup>790</sup> Focus Group 3 - 3 October, 2010.

To summarise, then, women who came from Christian backgrounds shared three different processes of conversion. First, conversion as a gradual transition which developed from attending church in obedience to parents or guardians and culminated in an acceptance of and belief in the doctrine of salvation. Second, conversion as experienced by those who attended church regularly but had consciously made a decision not to be Christians but then due to some experience made a decision to accept salvation. Third, conversion as experienced by those who knew about and believed in salvation as preached by the church and were in some cases committed Christians, but who wanted to experience life outside of the rules and regulation of the church and so in that sense left the church but returned after some time.

#### **6.5.2.1.3.      *Conversion: Unchurched Women***

The stories shared by women who had little or no church background (unchurched) were more detailed than those stories shared by women from a Christian background. For example, Mary's mother did not go to church, but when Mary had a leg ulcer that would not heal, it was suggested that her mother take her to the local NTCG for prayer, which she did, and the ulcer healed. Mary continued to go to the church, though she does not mention her mother doing so, and 'gave her life to God' in her early teens. She left the church in her late teens and eventually got married and migrated to England, where the marriage broke down. The breakdown of her marriage possibly contributed to her becoming depressed, but in this depressed state she attended the local NTCG. Mary stated that she was not able to make a commitment to Christ initially due to the 'bitterness and unforgiveness' she felt. However, after some months and through the preaching and 'words of knowledge' she received, she recovered from her depression and eventually gave her life to God. She explains her conversion as salvation from insanity and suicide:

**MARY:** ...when I went to church that Sunday ...I was really depressed the Holy Spirit spoke to the man of God, I was on the last edge going off me head. [The preacher said] you not really going to go off your head your gonna be coming through, regardless of what you're going through you're going to rise above your situation and that really helped me. So actually if God hadn't really spoken to those people I don't know where I would be today but that really helped to say well when I saw there was no way out and I was suicidal and then God really spoke to those people and said you not going to be going under there's a way out even though I couldn't see any way out ... I held on to that positive word that they said that there's gonna be some way out for me.<sup>791</sup>

Rita spoke of her lack of church influence honourably and explained that the absence of a Christian referent was integral to her conversion experience, making it all the more special. Rita compared her story with the stories of those participants who had a Christian or church-influenced background,

**RITA:** I know that I'm special but I feel more convicted that I'm really special here. I wasn't grown up in the church, I definitely wasn't grown up in the church my life was a roller coaster I've been there, done everything you can think of and I've done it all everything you can think of possible to be honest, I've done it. It was about 10 years ago a friend invited me to one of her friend's house prayer meetings it was on a Monday and that was in (year and month)... After leaving the prayer meeting and everything at the time I had previously been diagnosed diabetic on medication and everything and for some reason I [had forgotten] to take my medication that day so when I went home in the evening I stayed by my friend that evening I said to her you know I forgot to take my medication and I said to her you know what I'm going to take all three doses which everyone knows me for that all three in one go and while I was there I got everything ready to do my thing and the Spirit of God said to me 'did you realise you've just got your healing in that prayer meeting'. I've been to several doctors and diabetes is out of my life [and] all the other sickness from that evening... a few weeks after [I] came to this country and it so happened that God would have his way leading me to go and join a family that the son is a pastor and the dad is a deacon in the NTCG never met them before it was a friend of mine that knew the family that introduced me to the family here and since then I'm living with them and I got my guidance and everything since then through the family, through the church that they've been to and it really inspired me a lot and I can see myself going from strength to strength.<sup>792</sup>

Rita's and Janet's conversions - described below - was partly influenced by specific occurrences, in Rita's case healing and in Janet's case a baby dedication. Other women

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<sup>791</sup> Focus Group 3 - 3 October, 2010.

<sup>792</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

shared examples of how a number of seemingly unrelated events, people, and situations brought about their conversion decision.

***JANET:** Why did I go to church? I was invited to a christening went to the christening and then I argued with the Pastor. What happened was I was invited to the christening and at the end of the service after the word had been given ... I remember thinking to myself I had a feeling that it was me[alone] ... in the church and he was talking to me and I had get a hold of myself and look around and think oh no there's other people in here he's talking to everybody not just me and[but] I kept having that feeling that it was just me in the church I decided at the end of it that he had no right to tell people how to live and I needed to let him that so ... I saw him and I says to him who are you to stand up there and tell people how they should live who are you you ain't no body and you don't tell me what I should do and how I should live you don't do that and he made no response except mmm mmm . So I went home and told my mum what happened and she basically said to me don't go back again and I said that's right I won't but I couldn't help myself when next Sunday came I said you know what I'm not going to let it go I'm going to go back, so I thought right I need to go back. My mum said why go back if you don't agree with him and I said I don't know I just need to go back but he shouldn't have done what he did So I went back and told him again and it was the same sort of things that he had no right to tell people how to live and again he didn't respond except mm mmm and I thought to myself I'll give him mm mmm.<sup>793</sup>*

The rest of Janet's story illustrates how seemingly unrelated events are connected by the narrator, interpreted and presented as a narrative which is interpreted as an important contributor to conversion. Following her initial encounter with the Pentecostal church, Janet stated, she reflected on the exemplary life of a Pentecostal woman she worked with. The life of this woman is connected with a visit to church, she believes these occurrences contributed to her losing interest in 'going out'. Concurrently her backslidden friend explained salvation to her and subsequently accompanied her to church; at that same service Janet's friend re-dedicated her life back to God and then began to attend church again. All of these situations, Janet believes, contributed to her eventually becoming a Christian in the same church where

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<sup>793</sup> Focus Group 2 - 2 October, 2010.

she had attended the baby dedication with the same pastor who had initially annoyed her. She spoke of her conversion:

**JANET:** *It was gradual, because whilst all this was happening, in the background so I found out afterwards, people were praying and fasting*

**PATRICE:** *The work had begun*

**JANET:** *You know what I mean! All these changes that I couldn't understand I was thinking, why don't I want to do that?*

**PATRICE:** *The work had begun....*

**JANET:** *Why don't I feel like doing that? Why don't I wanna go there? It was like... I don't know neither... it was really confusing for me. My life had changed and I didn't know why things that interested me [before] didn't interest me [now]. I did not know what to do or where to go it was a bit like that.<sup>794</sup>*

#### **6.5.2.2. Relationship and Growth**

As stated above a relational encounter is part of Pentecostal spirituality however it is not enough to remain at or be content just with the encounter, there needs to be a relationship. Relationship with God and growth in the things of God were closely related themes in the focus groups. Having a personal relationship with God is important for growth as a Christian. That personal relationship with God distinguishes someone as a Pentecostal and not merely an attender. Growth in the relationship is dependent upon prayer and Bible reading, as Gina explained:

**GINA:** *Yea, you get into a relationship [and] for you to develop and grow in that relationship you have to invest in it, [just as you] invest in getting to know your partner, wife or husband spend time getting to know [God] that's how I'm growing spend[ing] time with God in prayer, in devotion, reading his Bible surrounding myself with godly people, godly literature just speaking that wisdom and the counsel. Even though sometimes you feel that you can't be bothered it is an effort you have to, you can't get out what you don't put in so like a normal relationship you can't expect to reap benefits of the relationship if you invest... some of yourself. So [is] the same with God, you have to invest in getting to know him, seeking him, and the more you desire to know him is the more he shares himself.<sup>795</sup>*

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<sup>794</sup> Focus Group 2 - 2 October, 2010.

<sup>795</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

Coming together as a community for worship was to Kate's mind essential:

***KATE:** I think one of the things is to have relationship to relate to one another its meeting its coming together not staying away not drawing yourself away I speak for myself, sometimes you feeling a bit low when you are by yourself whatever you are going through and its easy then to say I'll just stay home to say if I go to the church, if I go the house of the Lord somebody might be praying or you hear something that kind of thing helps a bit and it's also getting involved in the church family getting involved, do something find something to do recognising that we can all do something it doesn't matter what it is just do something.<sup>796</sup>*

Growth could be hindered, however, and it is important to eliminate any hindrances.

For Adele a hindrance was the common-law relationship she was in with the father of her four children, who was a not a Christian.

***ADELE:** I was living with him ... I wanted to be in the church but because I was living with him ... I had all my kids with him ... I said [to myself] you can't be living with a man and in the church but then I after I had my fourth child with him when she was a month old I said a enough is enough I'm going my way this is when I got baptised, when she was only a month old and that's where I'm going I'm no longer iffing and butting anymore because I can't wait on him to come you know I can't wait on you not getting married you not married or whatever I can't wait on him it's the Lords way or no way that's how I stepped out and got baptised that's how I literally came to [be a] firm committed Christian<sup>797</sup>*

Adele's parents were not Christians, but she and her brother went to church with their grandparents. She spoke of how when growing up she knew that 'something' was calling her, and she said that she was aware that God was already part of her life. Despite this she got into a relationship, one which she knew hindered her relationship with God. She felt it necessary to remove the hindrance by leaving the relationship, particularly as her partner did not seem prepared to get married. Life's situations, particularly difficult ones, can engender growth:

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<sup>796</sup> Focus Group 4, 13 September 2012.

<sup>797</sup> Focus Group 3, 3 October 2010.

**GINA:** *A lot of growth comes through different situations and circumstances that you face, I think God allows you to see to go through those situations, regardless of how tragic and hurtful they are but they are simply for you to grow, grow in your character, grow in your faith and trust in Him therefore growing spiritually as well as long as you continue to trust him and holding on to him God will use those situations as a way to give him glory but for you also to grow.*<sup>798</sup>

**ELLA:** *I have been in church all of my life I have been saved since I was twelve, my relationship with the Lord kicked in on a different level when I went through a difficult time and it's like in the scriptures I believe it was when Jehosaphat who said when my back was against the wall at that point in my personal life I had nowhere else to go but to the Lord it's about relationship I remember specifically there was one of many significant moments that I had I was living in rented accommodation and my marital home that I was in with my ex-husband at the time the house big massive problem lots of financial issues attached to that which was causing a lot of stress because at that time I was alone with my children and I wasn't working and I remember I knelt... no I stood in my hall way and I said Lord I showed him the letter and I lifted it up before him...*<sup>799</sup>

Growth and the desire to grow are explained as a processes which can affect the emotions, causing people to cry for example, such is the intensity of the desire. This is especially so in the months following conversion, when individuals are dealing with behaviours and attitudes associated with their life before conversion.

A number of women would go to the altar at most of the services, as explained by

Connie:

**CONNIE:** *...I remember in the early [years] ...I spent a lot of time at the altar crying I didn't even realise I was doing it but one of the sisters said to me you always used to be crying at the altar, help me remember because, every time I went up there it was something different so it was a process of change and mind set and how to deal with situations, cus you're a Christian but you're a sister, you know you've got all these different roles and hats that you wear and you have to be a Christian in all of these situations, it was a learning experience. I did not grow up as a Christian, I would say I had Christian principles around me, but learning how to be a Christian in the work place was a whole different thing to me 'cus I wouldn't say I was rowdy but if you said something I would have something to say but God had to always temper my tongue, well no you can't always speak out like and you can't always get the wrong end of the stick you've got to listen so all of that was a process and it's a processing of word and preaching and teaching and the ministry of worship I can't not mention*

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<sup>798</sup> Focus Group 1 - 2 October, 2010.

<sup>799</sup> Focus Group 7, 10 October, 2013.



*worship, worship to me that is where it all happens where you just have that time where God is ministering to you, you're releasing and all of the changes start to happen in that process as well.*<sup>800</sup>

*PAM: ...every altar call I found myself going to the altar even if I'm not guilty I find myself going to the altar and when I got matured I really stopped ... I started learning for myself, reading the word of God, understanding the word of God and I find that was more quieted and seeking God for myself that was how I ended up in the Pentecostal.*<sup>801</sup>

The process of growth should become a way of life:

*CLARA: It becomes a way of life... building... growing*

*MC: What becomes a way of life sorry?*

*CLARA: Your walk with God the growth in you[r] spirituality.*

*MC: How does that happen?*

*CLARA: Gradually, without even realising it, you can't pinpoint when it started happening but you can see the growth. [MC.: ok] Not only can you see for yourself but you are told... you can see the difference in your day, you can see the difference as the days progress, the months progress as the problems comes about [MC.: right.. right] and they don't stop but you learn how to deal with them in a different way...you learn how to share its not about pride anymore, yes you are still a proud person – because your human- but it does not come to the fact that it is about me, it is about God.*<sup>802</sup>

Carlie, who has been a member of both a Black majority Pentecostal and a White majority church, believes that it is the close and personal relationship with God that enables Black women to cope with the challenges of racism and sexism that they meet in their lives.

### **6.5.2.3. Bible**

‘The Word’ whether read, studied, meditated upon or preached is a key aspect of the participants’ spirituality,

*CONNIE: [R]eading most definitely for me I love to study the word I will take it up and I will just sit and I will go to chapters I have read the bible – you've*

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<sup>800</sup> Focus Group 3, 3 October, 2010.

<sup>801</sup> Focus Group 5, September 18, 2012.

<sup>802</sup> Focus Group 1, 2 October, 2010.

*probably done it yourself – read the bible from cover to cover 3, 4 or 5 times and that may sound like a trial but in it there is a process of different things but there is also a connection with God even through the begats- (laughter and verbal and non-verbal agreement) I quickly found out the begats.....the first time I read it , it was like walking through sludge, it came up again the next February and it was like the Holy Spirit said to me when I was reading it, it was like God showing me his photo album of his family ( smiles and affirmation) ...you understand what I'm saying (directed to the group)you know when you go through the family and this is so and so and it became a relationship, it's always been about a relationship, but there's always that it's just reading and it's hard, but when I changed my sort of perception of it.<sup>803</sup>*

**PATRICE:** *Oh my days – when I'm in church you know what draws me what closes out every distraction somebody who is up there knows the bible and tells me this scripture that I have been reading for how many years and I'm going eh how did he get that out of this I have been reading this for years and it's just so clear to me now. Wow, he's eaten and I'm catching the crumbs, I like to hear someone who is preaching and preaches the word. I don't mind the odd joke but I can't just listen to someone for who the whole sermon is just joke Jesse Duplantis – I can't do it I can't listen to him – he is probably a lovely man and he's probably sweetly saved but you know when I listen to his message I am distracted I have to sieve through what's a joke and what's the word, just deliver the word that what I want, I will sit and I will eat. That's what I want and I can walk away and go wow and I can dwell on that for so long and not only am I dwelling on that but I am reading the scripture before that and see how that plays in to that and I'm thinking that meant that then... where's' that scripture that says..... yea but I know and what about that one. It's like a spider's web where you start in the middle and you just branch out....<sup>804</sup>*

When Patsy went through marital difficulties, she found comfort in the Bible:

**PATSY:** *I had a scripture when my marriage was breaking down the scripture where God will be my husband and I threw my bible across the room I thought I don't want some God up here who I can't touch and feel and I realised that being a husband it means he cares about me, he meets my needs, he listens to me...<sup>805</sup>*

During Jessica's divorce, as she faced the challenge of raising her children by herself, the Bible was again a source of strength. It is interesting to note that Elaine, as a young Christian also believed Bible reading was one of the more important Christian

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<sup>803</sup> Focus Group 3 - 3 October, 2010.

<sup>804</sup> Focus Group 2, 2 October, 2010.

<sup>805</sup> Focus Group 7, 10 October, 2013.

activities. Perhaps this was because once you can read the Bible, it is always accessible, whereas fasting and prayer take a more effort and discipline,

**ELAINE:** *Erm I agree that it's prayer, I'm more so in my Bible like recently, I've found I'm understanding much more than I did before cause I would read and I would be lost like what would that mean, but now I understand and also when I see things happening especially this time I see so much things happening among my friends and family, at work as well. I think being connected to the word, I'm still like a baby in Christ and I still have to work on my prayer life fasting I've tried to do as well I need more help in that to be honest but I know that I'll get a break through once I've started to develop those main things.*<sup>806</sup>

It was deemed important to meditate upon and depend upon what the Bible says and to make use the words of the Bible.

**CLARA:** *... you just determine that this has to be done now, you have to use some words like he [Jesus] said that you said you would do it now*

**ME:** *Like*

**CLARA:** *He said he will heal you now, and he will not let no plague or whatever come nigh upon your dwelling, sometimes you have to use words that he use and remind him that he said.*<sup>807</sup>

The Bible is a source of comfort and direction in times of challenge.

**JESSICA:** *I remember once I was a bit discouraged because when I went through my divorce you do get discouraged with circumstances I remember the Lord said to me stand in my word to be a role model for your boys if I didn't stand in those times they could have lost their faith and gone somewhere else so I basically listened to what the word of God said that.*<sup>808</sup>

The individual was described as being a 'living' word of God, so much so that where there is chaos the presence of someone who lives by the word should bring peace. One of the participants worked in education, and she was convinced that her presence, which was influenced by the Bible and the Holy Spirit, had a positive influence on

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<sup>806</sup> Focus Group 3 - 3 October, 2010.

<sup>807</sup> Focus Group 1, 2 October, 2010.

<sup>808</sup> Focus Group 5, 18, September 2012.

children who would otherwise misbehave. She attributed that impact to her life as a living word.<sup>809</sup> A colleague paraphrased from a book by Mark Green, *Ministry in the Work Place*, which encourages Christians to live out the gospel.<sup>810</sup> In this participant's mind this living out of the gospel was realised in her gaining permission to establish a contemplation room at her place of work. Though the room was for all faiths, it was interpreted by the participant as a vehicle through which she could share her Christian faith.

#### **6.5.2.4. Prayer**

Prayer was discussed or referred to in every discussion, despite the fact that a direct question in reference to prayer was never posed. This discipline is evidently central to BBPW spirituality. After one participant made a statement in which she stated that to build faith it was necessary to pray more and to fast more, I asked her what she meant. She explained that the amount of prayer and the amount of fasting undertaken should increase particularly when facing difficult situations. People who are filled with the Holy Spirit were said to have greater insight when it comes to prayer because the Holy Spirit can reveal situations and people to them supernaturally and this insight enables them to pray more effectively. The idea that the prayer of a Pentecostal was more effective than that of a non-Pentecostal was challenged by one of the participants:

***JOAN:** But there are times when people that are not Pentecostal and they pray a prayer you would be surprised to know it makes a big difference*

***KATE:** They are not Pentecostal but they must have had some experience you know it not everyone who is Spirit filled is under the umbrella of Pentecostal even though they have been baptised, some don't fully understand what they have received..... because it is not an ongoing thing in the church that they*

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<sup>809</sup> Focus Group 5, 18, September 2012.

<sup>810</sup> Focus Group 5, 18, September 2012.

*belong to...but God want to bring it out and it's important for one to be baptised in the Holy Spirit.*<sup>811</sup>

Like the Bible, prayer is of particular help in difficult situations in every aspect of life, not just in the church. The participants prayed regarding difficult employers, racist procedures in the education system, marital issues and children.

#### **6.5.2.5.    *The Noise of Joy***

Being Pentecostal involves noise and exuberance, what I term *the noise of joy*. A number of the women who were raised in Jamaica related how as children or young people they loved the Pentecostal church because of how people worshipped and their enthusiasm for God. These participants attended or belonged to other denominations but would sometimes sneak out unknown to their parents to go to the local Pentecostal church. While participants recounted how they enjoyed the singing and the worship, they also shared that their parents were against the 'clap han' church. Toulis has noted that the Pentecostal Church was considered a church for the lower classes and the poor.<sup>812</sup> One participant who attended a Baptist church remembered going to a service conducted by Billy Graham and as a result committed her life to Christ. She decided to attend a Pentecostal church, but her mother was incensed at the mere suggestion.

The noise generated by Pentecostal worship is justified on the basis of Acts 2:6, in which the participants refer to the day of Pentecost and speak of the occurrence in the upstairs room as being 'noised abroad'. The noise was not humanly motivated but was rather the work of the Spirit.<sup>813</sup> Joy is part of Pentecostal worship and also of being Pentecostal, and when someone is joyful that person cannot be quiet, even if the individual has a quiet personality.

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<sup>811</sup> Focus Group 4 – 13 September, 2012.

<sup>812</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 109.

<sup>813</sup> Acts 2:6 KJV.

The joy that he or she feels needs to be expressed, and the expression is exuberant, which causes people to shout and jump and generally move. As one participant said, ‘it is not possible to be still when the Spirit moves’.<sup>814</sup> Joy is further expressed in how life is lived. A complete intrinsic change affects attitudes and passions and hence behaviours. One participant in her twenties who had attended the Pentecostal church all her life stated how she compared her lifestyle as a Christian to the lifestyles of those who attended her Roman Catholic school. Their attitudes and behaviour were completely different, the inference being that their behaviour did not reflect someone who had undergone an intrinsic change. For her the role of the Holy Spirit was primary: ‘what the Holy Spirit was doing inside to me was completely different to what I saw in other people’.<sup>815</sup> Although some of the participants acknowledged that culture plays a role in Pentecostal expression, particularly Jamaican/West Indian culture, Pat pointed out that the expression was not peculiar to Black people,

***PAT:** Now Pentecostal[ism] is a passion it’s a drive and when we sing we express ourselves when we preach its expressed, for some people it’s a bit scary ...but they’re not used to that way of life [but] a lot of us who come from the West Indies anyway, we are used to that mostly blacks [but there] are whites in Jamaica but they speak patois and they go to church just like we do they only have white skin but their mannerisms are just like [ours]. ...I worked in the health service we used to have on a Wednesday prayer there were quite a few of us from different churches...they were Christians, Whites, Chinese and Black and we used to use our lunchtime on a Wednesday ... to pray and being in that setting they weren’t sort of jumping around but when they prayed you hear[d] it coming out and these are white skinned people and they prayed, they prayed with conviction because they believe in the Word and so the link comes on to me and I feel the same power I prayed and the next one prayed so it’s not about the skin or anything it’s the drive the passion, having the word and expressing, I think.*<sup>816</sup>

It was acknowledged that expression can differ even among Pentecostal churches. One participant shared how upon migrating to the United Kingdom she was disturbed by the pipe

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<sup>814</sup> Kate, Focus Group 4 – 13 September, 2012.

<sup>815</sup> Mya, Focus Group 6 – 10 October 2013.

<sup>816</sup> Focus Group 4 – 13 September, 2012.

smoking and the public displays of affection by unmarried couples in an Assemblies of God church she had visited. She did not return.

Difference in lifestyle choices and expression did not mean that the power of the Spirit was exclusive to Pentecostals. Not everyone who is Pentecostal comes under the umbrella of the Pentecostal church, and the power of the Spirit can be evident in non-Pentecostal churches, as Kate explained,

*KATE: ...For instance the Church of England we look to that hierarchy church, God can baptise somebody there in the Holy Spirit but because that operation is not progressive among them... God wants to use that one as a torch to kindle somebody else so seek after the baptism of the Holy Spirit so the Pentecost part is very important each one wants the experience.*<sup>817</sup>

Some women were attracted to the Pentecostal church by this vibrancy, the noise of joy, and with that joy came freedom to dance, shout, worship and preach ‘seriously’ about hell and heaven. When she first attended a Black Pentecostal church in her thirties, Sarina, who had previously attended a predominantly White Methodist church, was struck by the shouting and praying aloud because her worship experience had been much quieter. Pentecostal worship was the complete opposite of what she was used to. This worship was ‘very open and expressive’, with people free to express themselves. However, she found that she had great affinity with this expression, especially with speaking in tongues, a gift that allowed her to say all that she wanted to say to God.<sup>818</sup> Nina, who was in the same group, came to Pentecostalism from an Anglican background. She stated that as a child being part of this communion filled her with the desire to be part of something, a participation that might include swinging the frankincense or passing the chalice. Her first experience of ‘a presence’, she said, was not in the Pentecostal church but in the Anglican church. She explained that the presence was not ‘spooky’ or ‘supernatural’, for she knew even at a young

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<sup>817</sup> Focus Group 4 – 13 September, 2012.

<sup>818</sup> Sarina, Focus Group 6 – 10, October 2013.

age that what she experienced was to do with church or around God. She continued by stating that she believed ‘noise’ which is reminiscent of Pentecostal worship is not necessary and that it is possible to worship and feel his presence without exuberance. Celeste responded to Nina by relating her experience of going to a Methodist church and to a number of local churches and eventually realising that the reason she did not fit in or felt that she could not stay was that it was too quiet. When she came to the Pentecostal church, she found ‘it fit like a glove’. Sarina continued by explaining that Pentecostal expression was culturally influenced and perpetuated by preachers. By prayers and by moves of the Holy Spirit these expressions are observed and perpetuated by Pentecostals. However, such practice should not be confused with mere imitation, as the whole being is brought to worship, that is ‘your heart, your mind, your body, and ... that’s what Pentecostal [experience] embraces.’<sup>819</sup>

### **6.5.3. Male-Female Relations**

The following section did not fit neatly into the discussion about Pentecostal spirituality but is to my mind pertinent to the way that Pentecostal women understand themselves in relation to the church and to males. Women in the Black Pentecostal church are in the majority, and they speak of themselves as the driving force of the church. The impact of female relations and relatives, particularly in childhood, cannot be overlooked. Marian sums up that influence:

***MARION:** ...I respect my mum teaching me the Pentecostal side, the hymns, scriptures from the Bible and knowing God, God is so important<sup>820</sup>*

On the majority of occasions when a person was mentioned as a primary influence, both before and after conversion, that person was a female. Monica, who was not raised in

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<sup>819</sup> Mya, Focus Group 6 – 10, October 2013.

<sup>820</sup> Focus Group 5, September 18, 2012.



church, mentioned that when she was converted, the Pentecostal women prayed ‘all the time’, even calling her on the phone to pray with her. The ‘mothers’ provided her with the teaching, encouragement and prayers that she needed to grow as a Christian. Through listening and watching these women as well as by communicating with the Holy Spirit, Monica’s spiritual growth was engendered.<sup>821</sup>

It was stated that women are behind the men, but not ‘behind’ as in inferior but ‘behind’ in the sense that they spur the men on and encourage them to greatness.

*EMILY: you [women] are there holding up their hands praying for them it seems to me that it is the women who are on their knees most of the time they are praying up the men, you are there to help them in their ministry even if the women is a minister herself it is very important because she has that role to play which she has to look to God for strength to keep her going and it’s for survival we are very important we are the praying source, the oil in the engine. [laughter]*<sup>822</sup>

Emily is clear that it is not the men who are the source of strength, but God. The idea that as women we are all ministers arose a couple of times, once in a focus group discussion and once on the questionnaire, when in response to the question about how many female ministers were in the respondent’s church, one woman wrote ‘all the women’. Dana stated that although men are respected as heads, if a woman is connected to God she is able to control the man, another example that shows that power is from God. Dana continued by stating that if the woman takes her position in the home then God is able to use her, causing her husband to listen to her and to make her husband love her and she will be successful.

According to Carlie, experiences of racism and sexism are shared by Black women, but God is neither sexist nor racist. A woman’s experience of God is influenced by her gender but additionally it is also influenced by culture – the Black woman’s culture shapes

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<sup>821</sup> Monica, Focus Group 6 – 10 October, 2013.

<sup>822</sup> Focus Group 4 – 13 September, 2012

her experience and expression of the Pentecostal tradition. Pentecostalism instils confidence.

Women can have confidence in themselves because they are able to do all things through Christ, which strengthens them.<sup>823</sup>

***CARLIE:** ... there is one thing I see amongst us as women is that deep walk, that ability to pray, that ability to go into fasting, to go into warfare and draw from ...you know what I mean? ... [W]hen I talk to women and I talk to them about their experiences if it wasn't for God it's that spirituality that depth that they have been through that have got them through.*<sup>824</sup>

Patsy supports Carlie's statement by noting that relying on God must work for otherwise women would not continue to depend on God. Patsy wanted to clarify, however, that all black women do not go through negative experiences and so dependence on God is not only because of bad experiences.

## **6.6. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have presented an analysis of eight focus groups conducted with BBPW. The resulting data was analysed using category construction with the categories assigned being subjective, influenced by my cultural lens.<sup>825</sup> Spirituality is an abstract concept, a 'slippery term', which renders its concrete definition difficult. It is easier to say what it consists of than what it is, a situation that is typical of many abstract concepts. We can say, for instance, what education consists of, but what it *is* is more difficult. Some of the women explained Pentecostal spirituality as consisting of a connection made through relationship with God; for others spirituality could be found also in the ability of the human being to have insight into the supernatural realm.

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<sup>823</sup> Patsy, Focus Group 7 - 12 October, 2013.

<sup>824</sup> Focus Group 7 - 12 October, 2013.

<sup>825</sup> Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*, 97.

This chapter forms the core of this study as it brings to the fore the central characters, BBPW, and their experiences. The central themes that arose from their discussions are concerned with spirituality, with these ordinary theologians discussing its definition as well as highlighting the key elements of Pentecostal spirituality, which are conversion, relationship and growth, Bible reading and prayer.

How do these themes interrelate? How does one category influence another? As described above there are three superordinate themes first, Pentecostal spirituality is BBPW's way of being; second, Pentecostal Spirituality has key elements Pentecostal and finally Spirituality is the noise of joy and a number of subordinate themes. Pentecostal spirituality is the key theme running throughout the superordinate themes. Pentecostal spirituality, the focus of the study, permeates everything. Although the first theme is *Pentecostal Spirituality is BBPW's way of being*, the women would not put themselves first. God is first. However as the ordinary theology is theirs and the study is about them, it seems fitting that they are placed first in the hierarchy. These women recognise that they are important to the Pentecostal church and realise that they provide an impetus that spurs on the men. Some would have taken official positions if they had been offered; others had that opportunity but chose instead the duties of wife and mother.

Pentecostal spirituality is not about one's position in the church but about one's relationship to God, which operates on the supernatural and natural levels. There is the cosmic dimension, in which a woman's spiritual 'eyes' can be opened to 'see', understand or perceive answers and direction to situation she could not know through natural means. There is also the natural or earthly realm, where Pentecostal spirituality is at work in her everyday life. Whether at her job where she tells customers about Jesus or when she migrates to a foreign country or when she goes through divorce and single parenthood, Pentecostal spirituality is at work, drawing her into deeper relationship with God. The main objective is

to understand more of God and to know what his purpose is for her life, an objective for which she strives through prayer, word/Bible reading and worship. There is a joy in Pentecostal spirituality that is expressed in worship, but that joy is more intrinsic and brings with it a change in nature.

The emergent themes provide a layered understanding of Pentecostal spirituality. It appears as the supernatural God at work through the Holy Spirit in the natural lives of women, for whom Pentecostal spirituality is a way of being. Although accessed through conversion, it has maturity as a goal, a maturity that is achieved through relationship with God through the Holy Spirit, Bible reading, and prayer, which engenders growth. It is not silent, but is expressed through the noise of joy and lived experience.

## Chapter 7

### **Pentecostal Spirituality as Lived Experience – A Discussion**

The previous chapter utilises the experiences of BBPW as expressed in their own voice to explore Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience. From a data analysis of their ordinary theology central themes emerged which were primarily concerned with spirituality not as an interior concern but as a development out of lived experience. These ordinary theologians discussed the definition of Pentecostal spirituality as an emic category, highlighting the key elements of Pentecostal spirituality, which are conversion, relationship and growth, Bible reading and prayer.

The emergent themes from the previous chapter are used as a basis for reflection as a practical-theological dialectic. Beginning with the ordinary theology of BBPW their discourse is brought into dialogue with theology, history, and feminism.<sup>826</sup> These voices and perspectives help to reinterpret the ordinary theology of the focus-group participants. The rescription tackles the under researched area of BBPW spirituality first by offering Pentecostal spirituality as a deliberate way of being in response to life's circumstances which stems from and informed by a personal dynamic relationship with God through the person of Jesus and the power of the Spirit. Second rescription presents lived experience as an important but so far overlooked contributor to the development of Pentecostal spirituality.

Two conceptual levels are at play in this reinterpretation: the ordinary and the academic levels. Applied to this study, the first level relates to the ordinary theology of the BBPW; while the second level explores interaction with academic discourse as it relates to

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Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 19.

Pentecostalism. At this second level the discourse can come from within Pentecostalism's own ranks or from non-theological religious and social-science sources.

### **7.1. Pentecostal Spirituality as Lived Experience: An Integrated Way of Living?**

While Pentecostalism's experiential dimension is said to consist of three primary experiences, the crisis events of conversion, sanctification and Spirit-baptism, I propose that for BBPW there is a deliberate and conscious way of living which pervades their whole existence. Pentecostal spirituality as experience is distinct from the crisis events and has not received sufficient attention and has possibly been overlooked by academia because life experience, and in particular female life experience does not represent official ecclesial practice.

This discussion presents the development of Pentecostal spirituality as a life journey, a process which is punctuated at points by adversity and heartbreak, which although extremely challenging are junctures where spiritual growth takes place. In this place of process and growth *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* is developed within and as a result of the lived experience of BBPW. Adversity and growth lead the women to a relationship in which they 'know' God. Such a knowledge of God can be illuminated by the Hebrew term *yāda* 'the verb *to know* which I expand upon below.

#### **7.1.1 Key Elements**

The data presented in chapter 6 suggested that conversion, the Bible and prayer are key elements in the development of spirituality. These themes are explored below in dialogue with academic literature.

## Conversion

As referenced in chapter 1 of this work Jane Soothill before beginning her field work (I assume) she was asked, “are you born again?” Was she a Pentecostal convert? She replied,

‘whilst I had been baptized “in the spirit” (I am an ex-evangelical Christian), the church I was baptized in (an evangelical Baptist Church) did not practice glossolalia (speaking in tongues)’.<sup>827</sup>

She states that her reply was enough to gain ‘broad acceptance’ by the churches, which perhaps allowed her to continue her research among Ghanaian Pentecostal Christians.<sup>828</sup> As a missionary movement Pentecostals consider every new relationship as an opportunity to evangelize. However, in Soothill’s case I believe the question of conversion was asked not only at the level evangelism but at what I shall call the communication level. People who are born again develop a shared understanding beyond merely belief in Jesus and transformation. Being ‘born again’ signifies death to the old self, it is both a rhetorical and ritual surrendering of the self to Jesus.<sup>829</sup> The old life is replaced by a new one which imbibes new values, new behavior, a new perception of the world. If Soothill was not ‘born again’ dialogue becomes challenging because the conversation is between parties who do not interpret the world through the same or similar Pentecostal lens.

Conversion requires subjectivation:

Conversion as a process involves a mode of subjectivation, in which the individual is both subjected to this regime and becomes an active subject of the new practices and modes of interpreting the world they involve...not only do they announce a particular “truth” about the world, but also they recognize themselves in it, becoming not only the agent, but the subject of these new modes of seeing and doing.<sup>830</sup>

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<sup>827</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 5.

<sup>828</sup> Jane Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power*, 5.

<sup>829</sup> Katrin Maier ‘Redeeming London: Gender, Self and Mobility among Nigerian Pentecostals’, Ph.D., University of Sussex, 10

<sup>830</sup> Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 129.

It is not clear to me what Soothill's conversion status is/was however it is generally agreed that Pentecostal conversion involves a U turn. This is supported by the focus group data and Maier in her work with the Redeemed Christian Church of God.<sup>831</sup> Further, the initial U turn is the beginning of a process which is lifelong, painstaking and punctuated with both ups and downs.<sup>832</sup> It is to the conversion process that this discussion now turns as informed by the research of Grace Milton and her work on Pentecostal conversion.

In his book *Understanding Religious Conversion* Lewis Rambo uses *conversion* in a number of different ways:

It will mean simple change from the absence of a faith system to a faith commitment, from religious affiliation with one faith system to another, or from one orientation go another within a single faith system. It will mean a change of one's personal orientation toward life, from the haphazard of superstition to the providence of deity; from reliance on a rote and ritual to a deeper conviction of God's presence; from belief in a threatening, punitive, judgmental deity to one that is loving supportive, and desirous of maximum good. It will mean a spiritual transformation of life, from seeing evil of illusion in everything connected with "this" world to seeing all creation as a manifestation of God's power and beneficence; from denial of self in this life in order to gain a holy here after; from seeking personal gratification to a determination that the rule of God is what fulfills human beings; from a life geared to one's personal welfare above all else to a concern for shared and equal justice for all. It will mean a radical shifting of gears that can take the spiritually lackadaisical to a new level of intensive concern, commitment, and involvement.<sup>833</sup>

The theme of conversion along with evangelism are not unique to Pentecostalism but are Protestant Christian themes that have been adopted by Pentecostals.<sup>834</sup> Presently there is not a comprehensive Pentecostal theology of conversion it's nature, development and theological significance has primarily been explored by social scientists.<sup>835</sup> It is certainly an area for

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<sup>831</sup> Maier, 'Redeeming London', 10.

<sup>832</sup> Maier, 'Redeeming London', 10.

<sup>833</sup> Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1993), 2.

<sup>834</sup> Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 55.

<sup>835</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 4, 87.



Pentecostal exploration because conversion is the initial point of entry for all Pentecostals. Its centrality is further underscored by the data in that all the participants shared their conversion narrative and recognized conversion as the beginning of the Christian journey. Yet I agree with Milton that it is one of the most discussed and debated aspects of Pentecostal theology.<sup>836</sup> The main debate surrounds whether conversion is a sudden occurrence (Platonic-Augustinian) or gradual process (Aristotelian-Thomist). Again data from the focus groups provides examples of both.

Both forms include the ‘decision’ to accept Jesus as personal Saviour this is considered the catalyst which brings about new birth, and marks the death of the old self as mentioned above. Milton’s study suggests that the process begins much earlier than the decision and continues beyond the decisive moment. Her assessment of the field of conversion studies concludes that a stage model approach is currently the most holistic approach to the study of conversion.<sup>837</sup> The stage approach attends to occurrences and events leading up to, during and following conversion. Her work draws on the work of social scientist Lewis Rambo, whose process of conversion takes a multi-disciplinary approach and is unique among social scientific models because it takes seriously the religious aspect of conversion as religious studies.<sup>838</sup> To ensure a broad theological and experiential approach Milton uses Rambo’s seven stage model of conversion as a data collection tool in her research.<sup>839</sup> Milton’s review of literature discusses conversion among Pentecostal charismatic scholars, again Milton utilises Rambo’s stages as a framework for the discussion. The process begins with the context and moves through crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment and consequences.<sup>840</sup>

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<sup>836</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 4.

<sup>837</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 9, 89.

<sup>838</sup> Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1993), xi, xiv

<sup>839</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 10.

<sup>840</sup> Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1993).

Rambos' process begins with context which in Milton's review includes the *Biblical meta-context* that is *Biblical narratives* which shape thinking and experience. An example is a person's understanding of themselves in relation to the God, themselves and others. Mark Cartledge and the data from the focus groups suggest the biblical meta-contexts are mediated. Among the principal mediators for many Pentecostals, including the participants in this study, are mothers and grandmothers. Cartledge continues that mothers are a key socializing influence in the born again experience and that influence extends beyond the home to include altar call rituals. Such influence is important to the ongoing maintenance of a familial Pentecostal identity.<sup>841</sup> This matriarchal influence should be kept in tension with the role of what Cartledge refers to as 'direct encounter with the divine' which he states emphasizes the altar call, unusual spiritual experiences, personal crisis and testimony.<sup>842</sup> Within this meta-context all other contexts are believed to be located and find their meaning.<sup>843</sup> The next stage is *crisis* where factor or factors motivate an individual to seek resolution. The resolution to the crisis can be found in a religious group, again the Pentecostal mothers are often a part of the religious group.<sup>844</sup>

Drawing upon Cartledge's search-encounter-transformation process *quest* involves a continued search for God.<sup>845</sup> I suggest however that Pentecostals view God as the one that initiates the call and humans are the responders, God is the initiator of the search not the other way around. 'God willingly invites believers to partner with him in achieving his will, even though he does not need their involvement to achieve his objectives'.<sup>846</sup> *Encounter* is presented as that which prompts a change in the believer's life. The initial change in the life

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<sup>841</sup> Mark Cartledge, *Family Socialization, Godly love and Pentecostal Spirituality: A Study among Church of God (Cleveland, TN)* Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion 2012, 23: 1-27, 19.

<sup>842</sup> Mark Cartledge, *Family Socialization, Godly love and Pentecostal Spirituality: A Study among Church of God (Cleveland, TN)* Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion 2012, 23: 1-27, 19.

<sup>843</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 91.

<sup>844</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 94.

<sup>845</sup> Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit*, 25.

<sup>846</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 33.

of believer precipitates an ongoing search, a continuous stage in the life of the Pentecostal Christian in as far as it is met with experience and subsequent transformation. *Encounter* with the Divine is one of the key and defining points of Pentecostal theology it sits at the center of the process. While human evangelism is important it is encounter with God that is the objective. Milton notes that Rambo places emphasis on the encounter between the human advocate and the convert. She argues that this negates the place of the Spirit, which is an important element in Pentecostalism.<sup>847</sup> This stage can be broadened to include Divine-human encounters as well as human advocate-convert encounters. Spiritual encounters can also be mediated through advocates – mothers, grandmothers, missionaries - or methods which include scripture, worship and prayer.<sup>848</sup> Divine-human encounters include baptism in the Spirit, dreams, visions and audible voices.<sup>849</sup>

*Interaction* is understood as a phase when one learns what it is to be part of a group, however in Pentecostalism there are no expectations for interaction prior to conversion. Interaction subsequent to conversion is classed as discipleship. *Commitment* is associated with rituals which mark a commitment. For the Pentecostal the most important aspect of commitment is the decision, it is this that makes someone a Christian. There are commitment rituals including believer's baptism, communion and testimony. Rambo understands *Consequences* as the strongest indicator of an authentic conversion. However Milton argues that for Pentecostals authentic conversion is indicated by the outcome and the fruits of the Christian life, this is particularly so if the conversion was dramatic or sudden.<sup>850</sup>

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<sup>847</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 100 - 101.

<sup>848</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 101.

<sup>849</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 102 – 104.

<sup>850</sup> Milton, *Shalom, The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*, 104-116.

## Prayer

Prayers in NTCG is not according to a set liturgy neither are they standardized but they tend to have definite aims. The aim can also depend on the context within which the prayer is conducted, whether it occurs at the beginning or end of a service or if it is a prayer for the sick. Rita said that she received healing of diabetes at a prayer meeting and Geraldine speaks of prayer in the context of a developing Christian relationship:

**RITA :** I could feel that difference while I was at the prayer meeting I still wasn't sure what it was all about thinking it was because everyone else was crying and praying and shouting I thought that was what was really hitting me, it was after a while I felt a bit different within myself and the difference I feel wasn't the ordinary feeling it wasn't the feeling of something I had felt before so that I know that it must have been God that was dealing with me there and then in that prayer meeting.

**GERALDINE:** Yea, you get into a relationship for you to develop and grow in that relationship you have to invest in it, invest in getting to know your partner, wife or husband spend time getting to know that's how I'm growing spending time with God in prayer, in devotion, reading his Bible surrounding myself with Godly people, godly literature just speaking that wisdom and the counsel. Even though sometimes you feel that you can't be bothered it is an effort you have to...

Prayer is the primary theological activity in the life of the individual Pentecostal but is also significant for the congregation. In the Empowerment conference programme a time of prayer was allocated on Saturday and Sunday morning before the beginning of the service.

The programme states

We anticipate a mighty move of God as we join in the Morning Glory Prayer and Praise. The session on Saturday will commence at 9:00am and at 9:30am on Sunday morning in the main auditorium...<sup>851</sup>

Steven Land observes that prayer suffuses every other activity. In this regard prayer is a precursor to 'a move of God'. In the case to the Empowerment Conference prayer did not take place in a back room but in the main auditorium giving the impression that it is not for a few people but many people are expected to participate. In agreement with most of

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<sup>851</sup> Appendix 2, pg.5.

Christendom prayer is deemed the ‘fundamental act of faith, the central act of worship and the deepest meaning for human existence’.<sup>852</sup> That is to be in communion and relationship with God. It is within prayer, prayer in the Spirit, that all worthwhile spiritual knowledge can be gained and retained, as it is the Spirit that guides into all truth. Pentecostals pray in the Spirit, which Land maintains refers to being decisively determined by and orientated to the Spirit i.e. Spirit-filled prayer.

Prayer can be expressed in three forms, with *words understood* that is prayer in the vernacular; *without words* that is the form of sighs, groans and laughter and with *words not understood* that is speaking in tongues. Prayer, according to Land shapes and forms Pentecostal affections and whether private or public setting prayer can be expressed via any and all the above modes. Land argues that prayer itself is shaped by the rites and rituals of congregational worship including the preaching and teaching of the word and the singing of songs what he terms as ‘missionary fellowship’. *Concert prayer* is when prayer is conducted in unison, in a congregational setting, in terms of sound it is like that of an orchestra warming up rather than a melodious composition. Nevertheless concert prayer demonstrates a unity in prayer which is a response to the unity in the Spirit.

Warrington maintains that Pentecostal beliefs about prayer are based on the Bible however temperament, and church tradition are also influencing factors.<sup>853</sup> Warrington further observes that African, Asian and some western Pentecostals view prayer as a power encounter. I demonstrate this by examining prayer as presented by Poloma and Lee in their study of prayer among American Pentecostals, and J. Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu in his discussion of Ghanaian Pentecostals.

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<sup>852</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 168.

<sup>853</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 214.

Poloma and Lee present prayer as fluid beginning as an active human monologue which flows into having a greater receptivity of the divine. Described as ‘radically divine communication’ it is not only verbal but is accompanied by feelings of ‘loving and being loved by God’ (affections).<sup>854</sup> Poloma and Lee identify three types of prayer devotional, prophetic and mystical.<sup>855</sup> Devotional prayer is measured and described in terms of human activities, activities which include petition, thanksgiving, adoration and repentance. These are said to be experienced as processes in which the pray-er (after surrendering to God) talks to and or listens to God. Prophetic prayer is a dialogue which reflects collaboration between divinity and humanity. Here divine guidance is requested and a response is expected. This divine encounter to use Cartledge’s term may take the form of prophetic ‘words’ from other human actors which may be an instruction to perform a specific act which may be confirmed immediately or subsequently as the guidance process continues. Mystical prayer is not a single act but blends active and receptive prayer in continuous dialogue. Described as representing a union with the Divine it is fed by impressions, dreams, visions and or trances. All three forms can blend together.

Asamoah Gyadu brings to the Pentecostal prayer conversation prayer which focuses not so much on the affective human-divine encounter but to prayer as spiritual warfare. Asomoah Gyadu examines African Pentecostal prayer as a religious interaction between the natural and supernatural realms.<sup>856</sup> Land talks about the forms of prayer, referred to above, Pentecostals, particularly those from the South use these forms not only to enhance relationship the Divine-human relationship but additionally to stir the supernatural for the

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<sup>854</sup> Margaret Poloma and Matthew Lee, ‘Prophecy, Empowerment, and Godly Love: The Spirit Factor in the Growth of Pentecostalism’ in *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism* eds. Donald Miller, Kimon Sargeant and Richard Flory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 284.

<sup>855</sup> Margaret Poloma and Matthew Lee, “Prophecy, Empowerment, and Godly Love”, 284 – 285.

<sup>856</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2013), 35

‘release of anointing’ and to ‘dismiss evil spirits’. There is believed to be power in the spoken word in line with Proverbs 18:21 ‘death and life are in the power of the tongue’.

Asomoah-Gyadu makes distinction between prayer in the mainline churches and those in the Pentecostal church. While mainline churches present the pray-er as a sinner begging for crumbs, the Pentecostal church encourages the pray-er to come boldly. In the mainline church God is approached through the voices of others in the form of written prayers.

However African Pentecostalism promotes the understanding that in order to be effective prayer is to be positive, bold and decisive.<sup>857</sup> This resonates with Clara who boldly uses the words of the bible in her requests (see p. 220)

Asomoah-Gyadu’s chapter on prayer is based on ‘Jericho Hour’ a weekly mid-day prayer meeting which attracts two to four thousand people. The chapter does not include personal private prayer stating that Pentecostal prayer must be understood in different settings identified as live worship, prayer vigils, revival services and evangelistic crusades. I think personal prayer should be included as it could be mistakenly assumed that these are the only settings in which prayer takes place.

In the current study reference was made to personal prayer by a couple of participants who spoke of their mother and grandmother getting up to early to pray (with raised voice) alone. Another participant as already stated in chapter 6 received prayer over the telephone. Warrington states that Pentecostals have encouraged each other to develop disciplined and regular personal prayer life this, in association with programmes – such as Jericho hour- promote prayer as a lifestyle.<sup>858</sup> I agree with Asamoah Gyadu that in the Ghanaian context weekday services and all night prayer have developed in a bid to create ritual space for

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<sup>857</sup> Asamoah Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 35; Proverbs 18:21 (KJV).

<sup>858</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 214.

supernatural attention.<sup>859</sup> The sick and the troubled may also be quarantined healing or prayer camps according to the particularity or extent of the ailment. Ailments can range from illness and infertility to unemployment and bankruptcy.<sup>860</sup> The common thread through these maladies is the belief that the condition, physical, economic or otherwise, has a spiritual cause, the remedy of which is thought to be gained through prayers which rely upon ‘the power of the Holy Spirit and the blood of Christ. Recorded prayers are sometimes recorded and sold to initiate the hearer into the Divine promises or to cast aspersions on their enemies.’<sup>861</sup> In keeping with the mainline Christendom prayer is offered on the merits of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

### **Praying in tongues**

Tongues are powerful in dealing with crisis situations and a way of exhaling power. Cartledge in reference to charismatics writes of the place of tongues within the context of prayer, in which prayer is used as a weapon in spiritual warfare in the event satanic attack. In such instances the Holy Spirit provides the words to use against evil forces.<sup>862</sup> When Pentecostals speak of praying in the Spirit Land states it refers to prayer that is decisively determined by and orientated to the Spirit. Asomoah-Gyadu on the other hand concludes that among Ghanaian Pentecostals, and I have also observed it in Nigeria there is an insistence that praying in tongues is praying in the Spirit while praying in the vernacular is not. This states Asamoah Gyadu is what distinguishes Pentecostal prayer as a spiritual activity from other Christian traditions.

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<sup>859</sup> Asamoah Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 36.

<sup>860</sup> Asamoah Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 41.

<sup>861</sup> Asamoah Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 36.

<sup>862</sup> Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossalalia*, 77.



However, I do not believe there is the same insistence among all Pentecostals. My experience of Church of God, more so those from the Caribbean, do not tend to speak in tongue on cue but would speak of 'being in the Spirit' or 'under the power of the Holy Ghost'. In this experiential state they would speak in tongues 'as the Spirit gives utterance' hence they are under the direction of the Spirit at this time.

## **Bible**

In line with other Pentecostals the participants understand the word as central to their spirituality. Focus group participants made references to *loving to study the word*, *interpretation of the word*, *the word as a rock/solid place* on which to stand in difficult times. The theme of the Empowerment Conference was *Connected to the Word* the conference programme graphic (Appendix 2) depicted a woman with hands raised, emerging from the centre of a bible. This graphically depicts the importance of the bible to women but also women *in* the word. *Word* and *Bible* is used synonymously however *word* can also be used to mean *preached word*, or *prophetic word*. However, Albrecht states that the Bible has priority over other forms of *word* and it is by the Bible that other forms are judged.<sup>863</sup> This includes the sermon, which states Albrecht, whether comforting or challenging, edifying or exhorting, directional or didactic, aims for biblical relevance. Patrice, one of the participants reminds us that this is not always achieved and is frustrating when one has to trowel through the jokes of the preacher to get at the *word*.<sup>864</sup> Pentecostal Christian and scholar Andrew Davies agrees that the Bible is central to Pentecostal practice and person. The late Ogbu Kalu illuminates the understanding of the Bible from the perspective of African feminist theologians, a perspective which is in line with the current research focus. First Kalu makes

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<sup>863</sup> Daniel Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality: Ecumenical Potential and Challenge" *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*. [http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj2/albrecht.html#N\\_1](http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj2/albrecht.html#N_1) (accessed 27 February 2016)

<sup>864</sup> Focus Group 2, 2 October 10.

it clear that African feminists do not ‘subscribe to radical feminist theology, they do not he states reject the church, yearn for a women’s church, or call for an exit from male-dominated churches’.<sup>865</sup> Most are what he terms *loyalists* a posture which includes *survivalists* for whom the religious space is a life raft to weather the socioeconomic and psychological seas of life and *elevationists* whose aim is to improve the quality of communal life through charismatic spirituality. Their charismatic spirituality empowers them, this was demonstrated in by Carlie

*CARLIE: I think that we have to .....draw on our spirituality on our relationship because some of the things we go through only God can take you through and bring you through and as I say I have been to several churches and visited, I have seen black people in black churches and black people in white churches and I have seen them alone and they share what they are going through and I ask how do you cope and its all about the relationship with God I think there is one thing I see amongst us as women is that deep walk, that ability to pray, that ability to go into fasting, to go into warfare and draw from ...you know what I mean? I think our experiences we go through so much a single mother raising their children the absence, there is no father that’s what makes us strong the fact that we are able call upon God in times of trouble in times of need that’s one of the things about our spirituality that we can depend upon God, when I talk to women and I talk to me about their experiences if it wasn’t for God it’s that spirituality that depth that they have been through that have got them through.*<sup>866</sup>

Kalu states Pentecostal spirituality empowers women to ‘confront society’ by applying the literacy and speaking skills that have been honed in church to their domestic and professional lives. The liberationists are integral to the system and challenge the system from within they attack without direct confrontation.<sup>867</sup> Kalu presents the former as a backdrop against which to understand a liberationist stance. Liberationists do not challenge biblical authority and would expect both men and women to take Paul’s radical stance on submission in which everyone in the family is mutually submitted to one another. Further Kalu states

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<sup>865</sup> Kalu, Introduction to African Pentecostalism, 154.

<sup>866</sup> Focus Group 6, 10 October 2013.

<sup>867</sup> Kalu, Introduction to African Pentecostalism, 154.

liberationists would not debate authenticity of bible passages, preferring to encourage their acceptance and apply them to daily life.<sup>868</sup>

Olive was converted to Pentecostalism from an Orthodox background she explains how since being born again she understands the bible differently.

***OLIVE:** The difference is before I was waiting for God who was far away from me now after I became born again I was taught when I read the bible the way it was interpreted for me before was quite different to how I understood it so did not understand that God exists in me and with my personal relations become so close and that God is next to me right with me and I felt the spirit, sometimes I cry during prayer or worship time, it's just how it flows and where it takes me this so this time I could understand I feel the presence of God and my relationship becomes very close.*

Andrew Davies provides useful insight into how Pentecostals read the bible differently. He is clear that what he presents is not Pentecostal hermeneutics, but rather an enunciation of what Pentecostals do, think and say when they have a Bible in their hands.<sup>869</sup> Pentecostals do not read the Bible to acquire knowledge, because it is not a work of non-fiction nor history but rather, as intimated in the focus discussions, the Bible is where God is met and where the Holy Spirit has an opportunity to meet with the human spirit. Therefore the Bible is not for intellectual comprehension but rather it is an instrument of divine self-revelation. As such there is not a prerequisite to know everything in the Bible in order to encounter God. Conversely an ability to comprehend all the Bible would be on par with knowing all there is to know about God, thereby restricting God to what is known. For the Pentecostal the unknowable and the unfathomable is at the heart of Pentecostalism; it is in the unknown that God is free to work.<sup>870</sup>

Unlike Evangelicals, Pentecostals are less interested in the surface meaning of the text or the author's intention rather their interest lies in the text's capacity to edify and inspire.

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<sup>868</sup> Kalu, *Introduction to African Pentecostalism*, 154.

<sup>869</sup> Andrew Davies, 'What Does it Mean to Read the Bible as a Pentecostal?' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, (2009). 216 – 229: 218.

<sup>870</sup> Davies, 'What Does it Mean to Read the Bible', 221.

This was poignantly illustrated in the focus groups in the case of two participant who had been through a divorce. The Bible is not only a book to learn from but a book with which Pentecostals engage, utilising it as a resource for divine encounter. Davies concludes that this maybe a distinctive of Pentecostalism. It is not read to grasp God but rather for God to grasp his child through the word, '[o]nce the word has taken hold in our hearts by that means it becomes fire in our bones, this is to Davies the very heart of the Pentecostal philosophy of bible reading'.<sup>871</sup>

The instances of women looking to the word for an answer demonstrates that Pentecostals read with an agenda, that is, there is an intellectual goal in mind. Davies presents bible reading as creative, positive and in a sense adversarial because the Bible is not accepted in its own right but rather is mined for treasures. He suggest that Pentecostals bring to the text a preunderstanding which come from their own life context which is then enlarged upon which results in some action – *what do I go and do about it*. The text has value only as it becomes meaningful, as it relates to the situation of the reader. The Bible unread is powerless to transform. However this can lead to two problems, selective reading and individual interpretation. Nonetheless despite the fact that Pentecostals do read and interpret the Bible as individuals it is also read and interpreted within a community faith. It is the community that unites the myriads of contrasting, individual, contextualized applications in an arena of 'mutual coherence and significance'.

Validation of an interpretation by a community does not mean there is automatically a broader applicable truth. Traditionally the spirit is understood as 'leading into all truth'. When the self is seen in the text the Spirit is credited with the revelation. Davies states when people are blessed and encouraged by an individual sharing their story the congregation

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<sup>871</sup> Davies, 'What Does it Mean to Read the Bible', 223.

understands that as the Spirit at work, ‘the Spirit is the ultimate arbiter of meaning and significance.’<sup>872</sup>

### **7.1.2 Pentecostal Spirituality as Experience**

The participants spoke about spirituality in one of two ways, both as the interface between the physical (natural) and the spiritual (supernatural) or as how an individual’s belief and relationship with God are reflected and lived out in day-to-day activities and interactions.

Integral, then, to an understanding of Pentecostal spirituality is how the Christian experience is mediated in everyday life. Although there is a corporate aspect to spirituality, there is also a personal and individual level. It is at the personal level that spirituality as lived experience is initiated, specifically when independently the women ‘accept Jesus’ and are converted. The process does not end at conversion but continues to develop as Pentecostal women are encouraged to personally seek Spirit-baptism and as individuals are invited to follow orthodoxy in the form of church doctrine.<sup>873</sup> This process has been identified as common to Pentecostals. This process includes:

(1) a previous experience of Christianity, which is a common sociological observation... (2) a problem that is faced, resulting in (3) some form of spiritual insight; this is followed by (4) an experience of the holy spirit or answered prayer at the centre of the process, and (5) the sacrament of baptism or an equivalent form of rededication; (6) experience of baptism in the spirit or speaking in tongues, which leads to (7) important consequences, which are some form of empowerment (love, power, healing and revitalisation). This is a crucial feature: life is transformed onto a higher level as a consequence of this set of experiences, which is why advocates are positive about their experiences but also wish to share them with others.<sup>874</sup>

The study indicates that all the women in the focus groups had experience of step one to differing degrees but step two applied to only five of the fifty-two participants. That

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<sup>872</sup> Davies, ‘What Does it Mean to Read the Bible’, 228

<sup>873</sup> Russell Spittler, ‘The Pentecostal View,’ in *Christian Spirituality: Five views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 145.

<sup>874</sup> Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 60.

substantial difference may be explained by the fact that forty-three of the women converted below the age of eighteen, and although a number of them left the church to experiment by going to parties or having boyfriends, they returned to church when they realised they ‘did not fit in the world’ or were ‘aware of *someone* watching’. As conversion was not the primary topic of discussion, it is not possible to comment to any extent on the other steps. What was clear was that Spirit-baptism was only mentioned directly by two participants, although references to the Holy Spirit were made in all the focus groups. The presence of the Holy Spirit was important as it pertained to lived experience.

The process of a developing spirituality continues beyond conversion as women navigate their personal lives outside the comfort of the corporate worship service. It is in this ‘outside’ space where components of personal stories and experiences which relate to significant rescues from destructive lifestyles or habits are constructed or narratives related to the decision to follow Jesus are developed. For Emily, an older participant, her conversion experience did not include any problem as designated in step 2 in the process. She had been invited to a special service and as someone who enjoyed going to church went along. While there she heard a song

When I first found Jesus, something o’er me stole,  
Like lightning it went through me, and glory filled my soul;  
Salvation made me happy, and took my fears away,  
And when I meet old Satan, to him I always say:

Refrain

“I am determined to hold out to the end,  
Jesus is with me, on Him I can depend;  
And I know I have salvation, for I feel it in my soul;  
I am determined to hold out to the end.”<sup>875</sup>

She said in the midst of the song ‘a voice’ spoke to her saying, “What are you determined to do?” She accepted the Lord that evening. It is such narratives which serve as indicators of

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<sup>875</sup> C.S and T. P. Hamilton 1909 Church Hymnal Pathway Press 1979 Cleveland, TN

the personal experience of conversion. The experience is so impacting that after conversion the women do not want to continue in their former lifestyle but exchange it for a more positive one. This new life does not protect the women from adversity. Emily went on to share that she got a lot of criticism for her new way of life. One of her husband's friends asked her what her husband thought about her becoming a Christian because, his wife would have to get his approval to join the church, to which Emily retorted "he [my husband] is not joining the church, I am". However adversity is the stuff of narratives and testimonies which are constructed from situations such as surviving divorce, overcoming discrimination, or dealing with lack of money. Such events serve as indicators and building blocks of Pentecostal spirituality. Experiences such as these strengthen the spiritual life of the believer, giving her a referent should a similar situation reoccur.

Aimee Semple-McPherson and Maria Woodworth-Etter are examples of Pentecostal/Holiness women who overcame adversity in their lives to become known as great preachers. In the case of Semple-McPherson, founder of the International Church of the Four Square Gospel, her first husband died while they were on the mission field in China, before her twentieth birthday. In the years that followed she was divorced from her second and third husbands, she went through depression, court appearances, and allegations that she had had an affair. Despite these circumstances, she encouraged her followers to trust in Jesus Christ, conducted a successful ministry and founded an international denomination.<sup>876</sup> Woodworth-Etter lost her father when she was twelve, went through a 'disastrous marriage', and buried

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<sup>876</sup> C. M. Robeck Jr., 'Aimee Semple-McPherson,' in *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* revised and extended ed. S. Burgess, and E. Van Deer Maas, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 856-859.

five of her six children, but despite all she led and preached at the largest revival meetings of her time.<sup>877</sup>

Within Pentecostal ranks experience is central to Pentecostal faith and practice, with experiential Christianity prioritized over doctrinal confession because God is to be known experientially.<sup>878</sup> Pentecostal observer Harvey Cox refers to Pentecostalism as the most experiential branch of Christianity, and yet in his reflection on experience Cartledge indicates that practical theologians have used experience in a general sense, in reference to a whole life or as an incident or crisis, largely overlooking the associated theological narratives.<sup>879</sup> Pentecostal theologian and minister Russell Spittler states Pentecostal spirituality cannot be grasped without an understanding of the role of individual religious experience.<sup>880</sup> Experiences can be overplayed however which can lead to narcissistic or spiritual elitism. In most churches any excesses of individualism are balanced by ecclesiastical accountability. Spittler points out that the ‘Pentecostal outlook’ is not the same as the ‘mystical experience’ described by William James in *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Unlike some other forms of religious experience, the Pentecostal is not seeking a ‘nothingness’, the ‘the disappearance of self’ or ‘Nirvana’, though exceptions may be found among Catholic Charismatics. The Pentecostal seeks encounter with God, with marked interest in experiencing the presence of God.

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<sup>877</sup> W. E. Warner, ‘Maria Beulah Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924) ,’ in *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* revised and extended ed. S. Burgess, and E. Van Deer Maas, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 1211-1213.

<sup>878</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 20.

<sup>879</sup> Mark Cartledge, *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans, 2015), 53.

<sup>880</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 14.



The importance of experience in the life of the Pentecostal has also been highlighted as a weakness in the movement, causing some Pentecostals to downplay this aspect of their identity. Pentecostals can, however “[address] unapologetically their experiential disposition as not only legitimate but an essential expression of their faith”.<sup>881</sup> The emphasis on experience makes Pentecostalism more appealing in a postmodern society which stresses individual choice and expression. The experiential dimension of authentic Pentecostal spirituality is generally acknowledged as consisting of the three experiences: conversion, sanctification and Spirit-baptism.<sup>882</sup> The observable physical display of the baptism in the Holy Spirit demonstrated and observed in the Pentecostal believer distinguishes Pentecostals from other Christians.<sup>883</sup>

The primacy of experience is evident in its relationship with the doctrines of the Pentecostal church, doctrines which are not explored systematically as would be typical in a seminary setting, but rather are analysed against the biblical narrative and personal experience. Theological presuppositions are thought to not necessarily provide explanation of what God is perceived to have done. However Pentecostal experience is understood as conversion, sanctification and speaking in tongues, it does not include life experiences, which is indicated in this study as shaping spirituality. To use a medical analogy a doctor is expected to have a medical degree but her experience is expected and trusted more than a medical degree alone. However her experience should include making life and death decisions under pressure and sometimes the diagnosis or procedure is incorrect perhaps even with fatal consequences. However the lived experience adds to her experience as a medical

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<sup>881</sup> Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: an Ecumenical Encounter*, 6.

<sup>882</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 256.

<sup>883</sup> Dale Coulter, ‘What Meaneth This? Pentecostals and Theological Inquiry,’ *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10.1 (October 2001): 38-64. During the early days of Pentecostalism Baptism of the Spirit belonged to a three stage schema of conversion, sanctification and baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues. Over the years sanctification has been dispensed with as a distinct post conversion experience.

doctor. So is the role of experience in the personal life of BBPW women. Stemming back to the inculcation of the Christian message, her experience of the person of Jesus developed within slavery, colonialism and discrimination. She had to make sense of that relationship within the context of her lived experience.

Experience, then I propose is another Pentecostal dimension, one which is illustrated by Peter in the Act 2. Warrington suggests that Peter defended what was experienced by the disciples and spoke of it as a fulfilment of Joel 2:28–32.<sup>884</sup> Yet Peter does not refer to the languages or the fire, even though these displays went beyond the prophecy found in Joel 2:28-32. It was perhaps taken for granted that this encounter was outside the norm of how God is known to work, and therefore explanation of it was not the point. The authenticity of the experience is not validated by intellectual rationale but by its effects, in this instance the effect was to cause those nearby to listen to Peter who presented them with a way of engaging with God.<sup>885</sup> Relating to God is an important aspect of BBPW's relationship and it is within the everyday lived experiences that the women encounter and deepen their relationship with God, the effect of which is demonstrated on their everyday life and behaviour.

Not every encounter can be explained, Warrington argues. The desire to explain every experience that Pentecostals have with and concerning God has the inbuilt problem of restricting experiences to those which can be explained. The Creator is then reduced to the limits of the intellectual permission of the created.<sup>886</sup> Pentecostal Biblical theologian Scott Ellington concludes that while doctrine may be challenged and not affect the heart of

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<sup>884</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 25.

<sup>885</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 25.

<sup>886</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 25.

Pentecostal faith, a ‘direct encounter with God’ cannot be overturned’.<sup>887</sup> Warrington argues that even though Ellington’s conclusion is an overstatement it does highlight what is “fundamental to Pentecostalism a personal, experiential encounter with the Spirit of God”.<sup>888</sup> Cheryl Johns states that as Pentecostal theology is praxis-orientated and experiential, life experiences are valid hermeneutical tools.<sup>889</sup> If a case can be made for theology, can the case be made for spirituality too? Particularly if they are closely related, spirituality being prior to theology, as suggested by Schneiders. That despite the critical and pluralistic state of contemporary theology it is spirituality, that Christian experience of living faith, that “in various times, places, cultures and in the midst of various issues, problems, and triumphs that generates theology”.<sup>890</sup> The danger here is that emphasis on experience as an indicator of authentic faith may mean that the absence of such experience calls faith into question.<sup>891</sup>

An appeal to experience has hermeneutical value but it has further value as an opinion which should be taken seriously. Schnier contends that when the expression ‘in my experience’ precedes a statement the expression is being used as a linguistic *cipher*.<sup>892</sup> The subsequent statement is intended to confirm, differ from or contradict an opinion made at a certain point in an argument. The appeal to experience when used by the Pentecostal then is an appeal to the authenticity of the experience. Conversely the cipher can be used by the interlocutor to question, albeit implicitly, the credibility of the conversation partner. The common ground however is the experience from which differing opinions can be presented

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<sup>887</sup> S. A. Ellington, ‘Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture’, JPT 9, 1996, 17

<sup>888</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 20.

<sup>889</sup> Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 87.

<sup>890</sup> Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality, Strangers, Rivals or Partners,’ 270.

<sup>891</sup> Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 256.

<sup>892</sup> George Schnier, ‘The Appeal to Experience,’ *Theological Studies* 53, no. 1 (March 1992): 41.

and perhaps reconciled. The cipher adds no content but lets the listener know that the opinions expressed are those of the speaker.<sup>893</sup> An appeal to experience in the course of discussion is not trivial but rather engages differences in emphases which can range from having no content to a well-considered urgency the difference is dependent upon who the subject is and what has been experienced.

Whatever the case however two emphases are intended. First, the use of the cipher demands that attention be paid to both the speaker and the opinion. This form of argumentation is a variation of an appeal to authority, but as an appeal to experience, it is at the same time a counter appeal, that is a claim for the dominance of one opinion over another. The dominance of an argument is not based on either content or logic but upon the genesis and possession of the opinion by a person or group of persons. If the argument could stand on its own, it would not need to appeal to experience.

Second, the use of the cipher signals that the statement which follows is neither ideological nor theoretical nor is it an abstract concept but is an ‘articulation of the actual operative principles or convictions of an individual or group’.<sup>894</sup> This type of appeal may question the interlocutors’ opinion or received opinion; conversely, the assertion of the speaker’s claim assumes a right to be heard because the appeal functions as ‘actual operative content’.<sup>895</sup>

These two forms should not be confused, as one describes the function of a partner in a dialogue whereas the other exemplifies an assertion in an argument. While the former is perhaps relevant to Pentecostalism’s general appeal to experience the latter form is relevant to the experiences of BBPW, who do not offer their experiences as just another point of view

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<sup>893</sup> Schner, ‘The Appeal to Experience,’ 41.

<sup>894</sup> Schner, ‘The Appeal to Experience,’ 44.

<sup>895</sup> Schner, ‘The Appeal to Experience,’ 4.

but as realities which have impacted their life and spirituality. As such it is not necessary to agree with the assertion but it should be taken seriously

Schner posits four rules governing experience: experience is a construct, intentional, derivative and dialectical. Experience is constructed from the past, is projective of the future and is exclusively in the present. Whilst it is shaped by complex physiological, psychological and linguistic activities. As a result, it is multi-layered in its potential for sense, reference and meaning:

By the time some moment of the interrelation of self and other is actually adverted to reflectively and appealed to as ‘experience,’ it has undergone a process of construction which a phenomenology can deconstruct only by stopping the flow of consciousness so as to dissect the living.<sup>896</sup>

Experience, then, can only be accessed through some form of mediation, which can be in the form of conceptualisation (memory, imagination or thought), articulation (language) or symbolic representation.<sup>897</sup> To operationalise this thought, a physicist might use the analogy of ‘wave’ or ‘particle’ to describe the atom while knowing that this description is inadequate. The physicist however does not see the need to wait for an immediate experience of an atom in order to describe it. Through the human modes of language and observation, the physicist can carry out useful research while fully aware that her language is limited.<sup>898</sup> However, once one is aware of the representation, then implicitly the appeal is to a construct. Hence, states Schner, “experience is neither given, nor unmediated nor incorrigible, nor atomistic: it is constructed”.<sup>899</sup>

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<sup>896</sup> Schner, ‘The Appeal to Experience,’ 47.

<sup>897</sup> Schner, ‘The Appeal to Experience,’ 47.

<sup>898</sup> Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*, (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1987), 24.

<sup>899</sup> Schner, ‘The Appeal to Experience,’ 47.

Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience was described by one participant as “that depth that they have been through that [has] got them through”.<sup>900</sup> That depth being the depth of relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ, is at the centre of getting them through all forms of situations. This does not only apply to spiritual experiences but in particular life experiences. Experience is what someone lives in and through.<sup>901</sup> These experiences are not one off events but are ongoing, perhaps to the point that they take on a life of their own, in what James Loder has called creation *relationality*. Relationality differs from relationship in that while a relationship describes a connection maintained by two polarities, relationality occurs when that relationship takes on a life of its own, which defines and shapes the polarities.<sup>902</sup> Here is an example of relationality from the ordinary theology of Connie, a focus group participant. When she first ‘got saved’, Connie often went to the altar, and spent much time crying. “crying a lot”, she says, was part of her process, a process of refining and defining. It was not always the same character trait that needed to be redefined, for as soon as one thing was put right, attention was drawn to something else. Connie knew herself, and referred to her temper as an example of a trait that needed redefinition. She could control her temper but at times, if provoked, her ‘tongue’ – the words and tone – was an issue for her. Her time at the altar caused her to realise that sometimes she had got the ‘wrong end of the stick’ and she would have to practice listening before reacting. Connie reflected that she *knew* what she should do – ‘I had Christian principles around me’ – but learning to apply those principles in everyday life required spending time at the altar, being sorrowful for what she had done and longing to do and be better by surrendering her will. That is not to say that the Bible and the preached word were not important, for the integration

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<sup>900</sup> Focus Group 7 - 12 October, 2013.

<sup>901</sup> Davies, ‘What Does it Mean to Read the Bible as A Pentecostal?’ 223.

<sup>902</sup> K. Kovacs, *The Relational Theology of James E. Loder: Encounter and Conviction*, 9.

of those principles were part of the process of relationality.<sup>903</sup> The longing to be and do better takes on a life of its own, over and against merely changing behaviour for its own sake or because the church doctrine demands it.

Connie's experience also resonates with Land's view point regarding sanctification. He argues that the refining and defining is less about entire sanctification or process, and is rather about love, about the measure of love that can be expressed to 'one who "so loved" the world'.<sup>904</sup>

Resistances seen in this light are confessed as they come into consciousness. The 'flesh' is mortified as thoughts and desires come to light ... and are renounced as 'not I' but the 'old I'. ... This requires affective transformation. Without this righteousness received and declared for will be resisted and the unrighteousness not fully and deeply repented – since love wounds and heals.<sup>905</sup>

Land asserts sanctification as 'moral integration', which is love as described above. He calls attention to moral integration as an on-going daily gift of grace through means of grace such as prayer, scripture, worship, fellowship and counsel.<sup>906</sup> The focus-group discussions suggest that some of these elements are demonstrated in the lives and behaviour of BBPW.

The presence of the Holy Spirit and work of the Holy Spirit is not only attributed to speaking in tongues. The NTCG statement of faith refers to "the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart" and "in speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost". The 'presence of the Spirit' was 'observed' during the focus groups. One participant cried, another displayed physical movement and another shouted 'glory' such was the feeling when these women talked about their experience. The joy of being a Pentecostal was almost tangible as the women shared their stories of victory over depression, overcoming the grief of divorce

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<sup>903</sup> Focus Group 3 - 3 October, 2010.

<sup>904</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 202.

<sup>905</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 202.

<sup>906</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 204.

and dealing with racism and discrimination. The women deal with these and other situations as Pentecostal women, as women who are implicitly aware of the Holy Spirit, who helps them to deal with the circumstances that they come up against. That lived experience is exemplified by this statement from Bernice:

*... being spiritual to me mean that you [are] led by the Spirit not just in church setting but in your everyday life as well so when you are in the Spirit you're trying to be as Christ like as possible. The way it is in society and community I think it defines everything that you do it's the way you carry yourself it's the way you speak to people you basically take command from the Spirit and show it to everyone.*<sup>907</sup>

Land states that Christians are in a *crisis-development* process, one which moves Christians forward not passively but passionately.<sup>908</sup> The NTCG statement of faith records that sanctification is subsequent to new birth and that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to a clean heart. These 'official' Pentecostal crisis events are the dots and Pentecostal spirituality is the line that connects the dots. Crisis events that are a part of everyday living are *in-between* and *beyond* dots and lines in that they extend after these official Pentecostal markers. Land observes that the milestones of progression are not easily distinguishable due to the lack of 'spiritual' developmental markers often found in historic church spiritual formation following conversion. This is partly due to the doctrine of subsequence.<sup>909</sup> He accepts the immaturity of Pentecostal theology in this regard, but makes the point that subsequence is the event, which I suggest can be both a one-off distinct event and also part of a process.

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<sup>907</sup> Focus Group 1 – 02, October 2010; Usefully Land helps the reader to understand subsequence by considering salvation history, Pentecost followed Calvary, and the resurrection followed Calvary, as in salvation history so it is in personal history 'there are crises or events which make possible new developments or intensify the development in a way unimagined before the event.'<sup>907</sup> Land speaks of Sanctification as 'moral integration' which is love as ongoing daily gift of grace through the means of grace (prayer, Scripture, worship, fellowship, counsel, confession, Lord's Supper foot washing).

<sup>908</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 135.

<sup>909</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 214.



Although reference to the Holy Spirit was made in all the focus groups, only a couple of participants mentioned to Spirit-baptism. Generally references were made to the work of the Holy Spirit in spiritual growth. Monica spoke of communicating with the Holy Spirit, which combined with prayer, reading the word and worship kept her connected with the Lord. In Dana's case, the Spirit of God was present in her life in a way that was different to when she was a Methodist. As Methodist she would 'steal sugar' and 'talk in church while the preacher was preaching', but when she became a Pentecostal, she 'lived freely' with the 'Spirit of God' now leading, very much a reality in Dana's life.<sup>910</sup> Patsy shared that she does not speak in tongues, but sometimes when she hears other people speaking, 'it takes her to the throne room ... right in the presence of God'. Her worship then 'takes on a different level' and she becomes confident. That experience may not be the same for everybody, she noted, as it is dependent on personality and relationship.

Efforts have been made to unpack the meaning of Spirit baptism and its underlying experiential dimension, but additionally, there are good grounds for further exploration of the experiential dimension demonstrated by the respondents in this study. Specifically that of conversion, in which the Holy Spirit convinces the unbeliever of sin in her life and her need for Jesus as Saviour, and spiritual formation. Conversion is the point at which Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience has its genesis and begins development. That lived experience is supported by ongoing Bible reading, personal devotion and corporate worship services. Pentecostal spirituality as experience continues its development and formation as part of the everyday experience of women, providing them with the spiritual tools to navigate everyday life. Experiences of corporate ecstatic worship, prayer and speaking in tongues cause the 'noise of joy' and lead to encounters that further develop Pentecostal spirituality, however

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<sup>910</sup> Focus Group 5 – 18, September 2012.

alongside the rites and rituals of community Pentecostal spirituality continues to develop in the individual everyday *experience* of the ebbs and flows of life.<sup>911</sup> Hence, lived experience is a part of the Pentecostal experience that is separate and distinct from the crisis events of conversion and baptism of the Holy Spirit but includes other dimensions of humanity, the psychological, political, and social, which are integral to human experience.<sup>912</sup>

As stated previously, the lived experiences have to fulfil the four criteria for spirituality as experience. First, the experience is neither spontaneous nor a collection of experiences and/or episodes but is a deliberate, conscious and consistent way of living. Second, the experience is not self-enclosed but orients the subject beyond purely private satisfaction towards the ultimate good, the highest value, which for the women in this study is God as expressed in Jesus of Nazareth whose life we share through the gift of the Holy Spirit who draws the person towards growth, with that growth the third criteria. Lastly, the experience is not a 'negative life organization' which is self-seeking at the expense of others. All experiences that meet these criteria are included; none is peripheral.

There appears to be incongruence in terms of church doctrine and the women's practice. This incongruence is evident if Pentecostal theology is assessed alongside so called rational theological discourse which places emphasis on doctrinal theology. However Hollenweger, identified Pentecostal theology as theology that is produced in 'story, song, dance and other movement'. This highlights the centrality of 'narrative, oral and dramatic forms of theology among Pentecostals'.<sup>913</sup> Although Macchia makes a case for more of a reciprocal relationship between experience and doctrinal concepts and in doing so he points

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<sup>911</sup> Schneiders, 'Spirituality in the Academy,' 33.

<sup>912</sup> Schneiders, 'Spirituality in the Academy,' 33.

<sup>913</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 50.

out the centrality of experience in the conception of Pentecostal theology.<sup>914</sup> Cartledge states that experiential categories such as ‘story, prophecy, poetry and song’ are saturated with theology and calls for an intersection where there is both continuity and discontinuity, resonance and dissonance.<sup>915</sup> Pentecostal theology, Cartledge states is created then broken, reshaped and represented through experiential processes. A static theology therefore lacks the necessary dynamism to motivate, inspire and ultimately be relevant to the life of faith. The outcome of such a process is the rescripting accounts as part of the on-going task of theological construction.<sup>916</sup>

As demonstrated in the focus groups, women in the midst of divorce were able to find strength not only to continue but also to reflect on their reaction as part of the development of their spirituality. One participant spoke of how she felt she was about to have a nervous breakdown and on the brink of suicide, yet in the midst of what was going on psychologically, she knew that God was speaking directly to her situation through the preacher. This experience was for her part of the process, her spiritual development. Such crisis moments were at one time the stuff of testimonies, issues about which the Pentecostal church community would come together to pray and lament. Bridges-Johns observes in the North American church this has changed because crisis messes up liturgy and testimonies reveal struggle and not victory. Crisis in the life of the North American believer, continues Bridge-Johns, has become outmoded due to the dominant evangelical culture’s perception of crisis as ‘negative’ and ‘shame filled’.<sup>917</sup>

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<sup>914</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 56; Mark Cartledge, ‘Pentecostal Experience: An Example of Practical-Theological Rescripting,’ *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association*, (28.1) 21–33, 30.

<sup>915</sup> Cartledge, ‘Pentecostal Experience,’ 30.

<sup>916</sup> Cartledge, ‘Pentecostal Experience,’ 30.

<sup>917</sup> Cheryl Bridges Johns, ‘From Strength to Strength: The Neglected Role of Crisis in Wesleyan and Pentecostal Discipleship,’ *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 1 (Spring 2004):137-153; 139.

### 7.1.3. Crisis in the Development of Pentecostal Spirituality

Pentecostal spirituality can be part of and probably has been influenced by the ‘Christian life as a journey’ metaphor from ‘grace to grace’.<sup>918</sup> The metaphor of journey is taken from the Wesleyan tradition, which Mulholland portrays as a “pilgrimage of deepening responsiveness to God’s control of life and being”.<sup>919</sup> This journey is an on-going dialectic of crisis and development, one which begins with the crisis of conversion described as the ‘existential conflict, struggle and resolution which comes with encountering the Holiness of God and the inadequacy of the human self’, and continues through the ebbs and flows of life.<sup>920</sup>

Development occurs between the moments of crises, and the crises become part of the journey of faith. In the daily life of these women God shows up, and they are amazed at what the Holy Spirit will do. The crises are the basis of testimonies, life narratives in which God does something decisive which before the crisis was not possible.<sup>921</sup> The testimonies and the sharing of the testimony provide the speaker with an opportunity to name the crisis and mesh those realities with the story of faith.<sup>922</sup> Crisis and conflict were central to Loder’s theology. There is a vitality that comes with seeking new problems and their solutions. Pentecostal Christian life is not just about knowing Jesus, on which the church focuses, but also about the appropriation and incorporation of that knowledge into life, as that knowledge defines the

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<sup>918</sup> Bridges Johns, ‘From Strength to Strength,’ 137.

<sup>919</sup> M. Robert Muholland, Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 12

<sup>920</sup> Bridges Johns, ‘From Strength to Strength,’ 138; Kovacs, *The Relational Theology of James E. Loder*, 9.

<sup>921</sup> Bridges Johns, ‘From Strength to Strength,’ 152.

<sup>922</sup> Bridges Johns, ‘From Strength to Strength,’ 152.

nature of life.<sup>923</sup> Learning takes place through conflict resolution and the drive towards conflict resolution is dominant in the self. The source of the resolution “can be found in the Christian life, through the use of doctrine, apologetics, liturgy and even scripture”.<sup>924</sup> From crisis to crisis, BBPW’s relationship with God grows, in other words the dots are connected. The true teacher is the Holy Spirit, whose task it is to engage women ‘in a deadly serious and sensitive business of pressing the Christian ... to re-examine through all the modes of consciousness the resolution to conflict that his faith represents’.<sup>925</sup> Macchia makes the point that the Spirit-baptism is the functional component of the behaviour of Pentecostals. It is an encounter in which ‘God is a powerful field of experience’ an experience which Macchia states is present in the joys and wonders, but I would add it is just as present in the anguish and sorrow of daily life.<sup>926</sup>

#### **7.1.4. Pentecostal Spirituality as *yāda*’, to Know by Experience**

Nowhere in NTCG’s declaration of faith is personal relationship expressed. It is perhaps intimated in the use of ‘through faith’ or ‘by the Holy Ghost’, yet in the lives of these women, relationship and particularly relationship which has developed as a result of adversity is demonstrated in their ordinary theology. This relationship is illuminated by the Hebrew verb *yāda*’, to know. In the Old Testament *yāda*’, is used in everyday terms when referring to an familiar individual object, alternatively it can be rendered in a scientific sense where knowledge of the object is concerned with its general features or the ‘essence’.<sup>927</sup> Lexicons interpret *yāda*’ in a number of different ways including as ‘to know from experience’. To know in this way goes beyond an awareness of the existence of an object or thing or beyond a

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<sup>923</sup> Kovacs, *The Relational Theology of James E. Loder*, 30.

<sup>924</sup> Kovacs, *The Relational Theology of James E. Loder*, 9.

<sup>925</sup> Kovacs, *The Relational Theology of James E. Loder*, 30.

<sup>926</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 56-57.

<sup>927</sup> A. Piper, ‘Knowledge’ *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible III*, 42.

comprehension of its nature; to know by experience carries the connotation of relationship, a specific relationship in which the individual stands with that object or infers that the object is significant to the individual.<sup>928</sup>

Samantha, who lived alone, went to church for the first time and the next week was woken by the ‘Spirit’ to return to church again. Living alone she could have stayed at home, but she knew that she needed God, and God had ‘found’ her. She recognised that a personal experience with Christ is the lynchpin experience; it is a key factor in sustaining the divine/human relationship. The Hebrew understanding of humankind was not differentiated and distinct but rather a ‘differentiated totality’. Even though the heart is sometimes mentioned in the Bible as the organ of knowledge, *yāda* ‘does not connect to any organ to knowledge, to the brain or even to the heart, for example, but involves the whole person. Knowing does not correspond to an activity that takes place in a physiological or psychological location but is a kind of knowledge that is normally accompanied by an emotional reaction.’<sup>929</sup> When Samantha related her story, particularly of how she took the bus to church because of relationship, she was moved to tears. Thomas Groome concludes that *yāda* ‘is knowing that arises from active intentional engagement of object and subject; it does not come from standing back and observing.’<sup>930</sup>

The Greek approach to knowledge characterised by the word *ginoskein* has a stronger sense of standing back from an object in order to ‘know it’.<sup>931</sup> When *yāda* ‘is used in reference to God, the term describes humankind’s relationship to God. Knowledge begins and

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<sup>928</sup> A. Piper. ‘Knowledge’ *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible III*, 42.

<sup>929</sup> A. Piper ‘Knowledge’ *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible III*, 42; Rudolph Bultmann, TDNT, 697.

<sup>930</sup> Thomas Groome, ‘The Purposes of Christian Catechesis,’ in *Empowering Catechetical Leaders* eds. Thomas Groome and Micheal Carso (Washington D.C.: National Catholic Educational Association, 1999), 22-23.

<sup>931</sup> Jackie D. Johns and Cheryl Bridges Johns, ‘Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study,’ *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1, (1992): 112.

ends with God and in this the case the knowledge of God begins with an encounter with God. In the Bible an encounter with God was an encounter with ‘one who lived in the midst of history and who initiated a covenant relationship which called for a response of the total person’.<sup>932</sup> How one lived in response to God was indicative of knowing God and not knowing facts about God. Once one knew, one could not *un-know*, and therefore one had to respond accordingly. Ignorance was not a lack of knowing the facts, ignorance was knowing the will of God and not doing it.<sup>933</sup>

Bultmann states “to know Him or His name is to confess or to acknowledge Him, to give Him honour and to obey His will”.<sup>934</sup> In the Old Testament knowledge was mediated through the lives of persons such as Abraham, Moses, and Joshua. Through their life narratives, readers are invited to seek God by harnessing the will to comprehend the significance of God’s dealing with his people and the implications for the individual and the nation. In the New Testament knowledge of God is modified: God is known through the life and teaching of Jesus, and therefore in order to know God it is necessary to listen to Jesus and to be willing to heed his message of redemption. The Holy Spirit is used by God to help people understand the revelation of Jesus. The writer of the Book of John holds that Jesus had perfect knowledge of God’s will, and hence the first step to true knowledge is receiving Jesus’ message. In John’s writing God is revealed through Jesus. Paul had a different perspective; knowledge is the operation of the resurrected Jesus in the ecclesia. Christian knowledge then transcends other knowledge, as for the first time in history God has been manifested in humanity. Everyone is capable of knowing God, but only by knowing Jesus, and this knowledge is brought about through the Holy Spirit.<sup>935</sup>

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<sup>932</sup> Johns and Bridges Johns, ‘Yielding to the Spirit,’ 112.

<sup>933</sup> Johns and Bridges Johns, ‘Yielding to the Spirit,’ 112-113.

<sup>934</sup> Bultmann, (ginoskein), 698.

<sup>935</sup> A Piper ‘Knowledge’ *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible III*, 45

I contend that there is for the most part a difference between the experience of women who were brought up in a Pentecostal church, where orality, narrative and dramatic features are the building blocks of their ‘theology’, and that of Pentecostals and charismatics whose background is in the historical church. Individuals who are familiar with the ‘historical’ church with its liturgical and written theology have a written theology that can be broken down, rescripted and represented. For the women in this study, the overall absence of a written theology means that the role of the Holy Spirit and their personal experience, their experience of community, story, prophecy, poetry and song is central. To use Cartledge’s terms, there is continuity and discontinuity, resonance and dissonance.<sup>936</sup> In a discussion of the relationship between spirituality and theology, Sandra Schneiders proposes that church history makes it ‘abundantly clear’ that spirituality as lived religious experience is prior to theology. Warrington makes the case that when the disciples’ experience of the historical Jesus is considered, it can be argued that it was because of the resurrection experience that the disciples were able to reflect theologically on the life and mission of Jesus. That reflection was based upon what they had experienced in the light of Old Testament revelation and against available philosophical frameworks.<sup>937</sup> Conflicting interpretations of the life and mission of Christ led to ‘theological refinements’, while subsequent experiences of Christians’ interacting with diverse historical-cultural circumstances raised new problems, but suggested new answers to the ‘intellectual edifice’ of theology that was being shaped.<sup>938</sup>

The much younger Pentecostalism, with its emphasis on morality and its position against the centrality of creeds and dogma - which were presumed ‘dead’ meaning they were not dynamic - did not seek to develop a repository of theology. For Pentecostals the scripture

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<sup>936</sup> Cartledge, ‘Pentecostal Experience,’ 30.

<sup>937</sup> Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality, Strangers, Rivals or Partners,’ 271.

<sup>938</sup> Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality, Strangers, Rivals or Partners,’ 271.



was read out of their context in the world and into their context as Pentecostals. Pentecostals sought to identify their experiences with those experiences found in the Bible. For Schneiders it is Christian experience, not theology, that spans times, places and cultures, and in the midst of contemporary life Christian experience generates theology which in turn generates spirituality as experience. Theology has both a role and a responsibility to critique spirituality as experience.<sup>939</sup>

In everyday life the reading of the Bible is central to Pentecostalism, as was borne out in the focus groups. Saving acts in the Bible are brought into the present where they are 'revitalised' and 're-experienced' in 'fresh contexts with a commitment to the historical referent which does not always require a one to one correspondence between truth value and historical accuracy'.<sup>940</sup> The Pentecostal interest in the narrative is about a fresh encounter with the Spirit which a revitalised retelling of the story invites.<sup>941</sup>

The experience of the affections, referred to by Steven Land as the depth dimension of Pentecostal spirituality, is also integral to Pentecostal spirituality. In his survey of Pastors William Kay found that 20 per cent of Church of God pastors expected to speak in tongues daily, with the most frequent response by Church of God ministers that they expected to speak in tongues occasionally. Those responses contrast with the responses given by ministers from the British Assemblies of God, Elim and Apostolic Churches, where 80 per cent or more of the respondents expected to speak in tongues every day.<sup>942</sup> In North America a sizeable number of Assemblies of God adherents do not speak in tongues or have stopped

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<sup>939</sup> Schneiders, 'Theology and Spirituality, Strangers, Rivals or Partners,' 271.

<sup>940</sup> Scott Ellington, 'The Reshaping of History and Experience,' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16, no.1 (2007): 23.

<sup>941</sup> Ellington, 'The Reshaping of History and Experience,' 24.

<sup>942</sup> William Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2000), 212-213.

doing so.<sup>943</sup> I know people who although they are converted and self-identify as Pentecostals have never spoken in tongues. As already mentioned, one participant shared that she had never spoken in tongues but had experienced the depth of relationship [affect] and strives for this dimension of *yāda*’, for knowing God through experience.

The depth dimension is described by Land as the ‘deep things of the human heart’.

<sup>944</sup>Here, then, are the abiding, decisive, directing motives and dispositions which characterise Pentecostals as a faith group, and also, to my mind, characterise Pentecostal spirituality. The presence of God moves and transforms believers affectively, as God conforms them to himself and therefore fits them to his kingdom, but the Pentecostal spirituality *yāda*’ experience also fits them to live in the present world and deal with the situations that come with that life.<sup>945</sup> ‘The Christian affections are objective, relational and dispositional’. They take an object and that object for the Pentecostal is God as expressed through his son Jesus. God is not only the object of Christian affections but also the source of those affections. As the source of love, righteousness and power, he expects righteousness and love from his followers and is able to act powerfully on their behalf as well as being able to give power and strength to believers. To accept God and follow his will is to acknowledge that the affections are relational, that they begin and develop in the believer as a result of the relationship that is shared between the believer and God, the church and the world.<sup>946</sup> Christian belief and practices express and shape affections. The disposition of the Pentecostal is to God and neighbour as a result of the affections. A disposition is not affected in the same way as feeling or emotion, which are influenced by temporary circumstances. A disposition to being

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<sup>943</sup> Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>944</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 11.

<sup>945</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 123.

<sup>946</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 135.

a certain way comes about because of the Spirit in the life of the believer.<sup>947</sup> The affections are not summoned by the will but ‘depend on the initiating, sustaining and directing of the Sovereign Lord of the church’.<sup>948</sup>

### 7.1.5. Critique

It should be stated that in Christendom, Pentecostals do not have the monopoly on experience. The Judea-Christian creation narrative depicts creation as the first human experience of God, and after that first encounter God was experienced in different ways – from dreams to face-to-face conversations, to the glory of the temple and prophetic encounters. In Jerusalem during the time of Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection, this experience of God manifested through Jesus was intensified with the infilling of Jesus’ followers by the Holy Spirit. Ever since that occasion, the church has exhibited an experiential dimension, but not without difficulties. As for every perceived influence of God, for every experience of personal transformation, there were false prophets who also felt moved to speak, who saw their experience as a sign of God’s special favour and as such as legitimising their behaviour.<sup>949</sup> The Christian church, then, not only experienced God but also had to be able to ‘discern their experience [was] of God’.<sup>950</sup> Experience and experiences can be overplayed, become narcissistic or lead to spiritual elitism. However, in most churches any excesses of individualism are balanced with ecclesiastical accountability.<sup>951</sup>

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<sup>947</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 136.

<sup>948</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 135.

<sup>949</sup> Acts 15:28, 11; Ephesians 4:3; Jude 19; Acts 6:3, 5; 11:24; Romans 8:3-4,13; Act 13:6; 1 John 4:1; 1Cor 1-3; 12-14.

<sup>950</sup> Evan B. Howard, ‘Experience,’ in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen Scorgie, Simon Chan, Gordon Smith and James Smith (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 173.

<sup>951</sup> Spittler, ‘The Pentecostal View,’ 146.

## 7.2. BBPW and the Shaping of Spirituality in the Pentecostal BMPC

What follows is an analysis of the role of BBPW in shaping Pentecostal spirituality in the BMPC based on literature in dialogue with ordinary theology. Although the focus is on Black women and on Black Pentecostal women in particular, the literature tends to be for the most part androcentric, but women are placed as active characters, which forces the reader to be aware of the female character and her explicit role.

Cox has written that ‘Pentecostalism is unthinkable without women’, and the same goes for the BMPC.<sup>952</sup> A strong statement indeed, and yet in most Pentecostal writings the contribution of women is downplayed or overlooked. I offer a few reasons for this gap: (1) Pentecostalism is still a young movement and it is still in the process of earning its place at the theological and academic table; (2) the makeup of the church and academia is patriarchal and has a tendency to gender blindness; (3) although the majority of Pentecostal congregations are female, the tendency is to research churches through the lens of their male church leaders, in the belief that the leaders represent the beliefs and practice of the church; (4) Pentecostal Black women (and only a few men for that matter) do not write books about themselves, their theology or beliefs.<sup>953</sup>

That women have an important role in the BMPC is widely recognised, but little attention has been paid to the nature of that role. While this work has established that women were instrumental in the founding and development of the BMPC, they have been instrumental in the determination of the British church, which I argue, began prior to the founding of the church in Britain. Even before their forcible removal from Africa to the West Indies, women were primary carriers and transmitters of culture and values which have

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<sup>952</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 121.

<sup>953</sup> The one book I found was by Io Smith and Wendy Green *Ebony Cross: Being a Black Christian in Britain Today* (London: Marshall Morgan 1990).

influenced their community, including the church. This discussion therefore concludes with a focus on their impact on the church, but not before the role of women in the evolution and transmittal of what I term *African-Caribbean consciousness* is traced, part of which was Pentecostalism as expressed in the BMPC, in the West Indies and in Britain.

### **7.2.1. From Africa to Jamaica:**

A study of Africa from 3000 BCE to 700 BCE provides evidence for the existence of a number of African regional states during which *African Cultural Consciousness* was a beacon of the known world.<sup>954</sup> This consciousness was a product of a rich African culture which inspired African people to advance a social mission and a moral ideal, and reflected a drive to sustain and protect those cultural ideals while building the educational-technological landscape of human intellectual expression.<sup>955</sup> Despite threats to its cultural ideals, periods of disruption, disintegration from invasions and foreign influences, the African way was always restored.<sup>956</sup> As African societies and gender roles were diverse, generalisations must be tentative, but we can state that before the European penetration of Africa, women were influential as informal political actors and in some areas carried out formal political roles.<sup>957</sup> Women held roles which ranged from legal minor participation where ultimate control was held by a male family member to chief. In many western African societies the queen mother chose the king, women warriors fought for the king, and powerful warrior queens led their

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<sup>954</sup> Reginald Hopkins, 'African Cultural Consciousness and African-Centered Historiography as Preconditions for Wilson's New World Order,' *Journal of Pan African Studies* 6, no. 2 (July 2013):23-29; 24. See Thomas O'Toole 'The Historical Context,' in *Understanding Contemporary Africa* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 23-56.

<sup>955</sup> Hopkins, 'African Cultural Consciousness and African-Centered Historiography,' 24

<sup>956</sup> Hopkins, 'African Cultural Consciousness and African-Centered Historiography,' 24.

<sup>957</sup> April A. Gordon, 'Women and Development,' in *Understanding Contemporary Africa* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 293,295.

people into battle. Even though women had these positions of authority and power, typically males had more formal authority than females, whilst women wielded more informal power as mothers, sisters and wives in the extended family system.

Two developments were to impact the on-going progress of African cultural consciousness and subsequently African Caribbean Christian consciousness; first, the establishment and growth of nations and empires in southern, central, and western Africa and second, contact with Eurasians and Europeans. The establishment and growth of nations and empires brought with it a gradual disconnection from the classical African civilisations of Kemet and the Nile Valley civilisations which were integral in the African cultural narrative. Hopkins suggests that the long-term psychological-political effect of disconnection was the elimination of a historical context.<sup>958</sup> When that historical context is lacking, the nature of the Eurasian and European aggression is misrepresented and an ‘imagined’ story is presented as history, one which gives no credence to the African or to her culture. Further, there is no explanation of the factors which gave rise to a weakened and fragmented national consciousness.

Despite the fragmentation of the national consciousness, it was not destroyed and obliterated. Fragments were carried to Jamaica (and other parts of the world). While in Africa the people’s concern was with building of a nation and people, but in Jamaica that effort was placed in surviving the dehumanising advances of Europeans as a result of enslavement. The introduction of Christianity and subsequently Pentecostalism to enslaved women alongside the soul force – that religious aspect of African Cultural Consciousness – brought about what I call an *African Caribbean Christian Consciousness*. Inspired by Valentina Alexander’s Independent Black Christian Consciousness, the concept of an African Caribbean Christian consciousness denotes the expansion of a Christian consciousness that

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<sup>958</sup> Hopkins, ‘African Cultural Consciousness and African-Centered Historiography,’ 26.

relates to African Caribbean Christian experience. An African Caribbean Christian consciousness employs but is not dependent upon a euro-western missionary Christian hegemony. An African Caribbean Christian consciousness incorporates women's own language of resistance, Christian faith and Pentecostal expression. Pentecostalism gave to women in general and to non-creolised women in particular a moral and social impetus, which would be further actualised in the establishment of the BMPC by women who migrated to Great Britain in the 1950s and 1960s.

### **7.2.2. Women's Pentecostal Experience Influences the BMC**

In the Black-led British Pentecostal church women outnumber men and are the primary agents of the church's work. The founder of NTCG Oliver Lyesight stated that in the 1960's the women 'were very evangelistic in their outreach and under them many souls were, saved, sanctified and filled.'<sup>959</sup> Pentecostal denominations therefore depend on the commitment of their women.<sup>960</sup> One participant spoke of women as holding up the hands of the men, a reference to Aaron and Hur, who supported the arms of Moses so that the Israelite army might defeat Amelek and his army.<sup>961</sup> The women recognised that although men lead the 'battle', that battle will not be won without the support of women, and not as just as foot soldiers but as second in command. Overt authority will not win the battle; support in the form of prayer and support of the leadership, male or female, will. This understanding resonates with the informal authority that African women wielded as mothers, sister and wives prior to colonisation, as stated above.

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<sup>959</sup> Lyesight, *Forward March*, 56.

<sup>960</sup> Beckford, *Jesus is Dread*, 154; Foster, 'Women and the Inverted Pyramid,' 45.

<sup>961</sup> Exodus 17:12.

Since the establishment of the BBPC in the 1950s, when women and men attended in near equal numbers, the numerical presence of the former has increased with the percentage being between 60 and 90 per cent female. They were responsible for much of the inner workings of the church functioning as both oil *and* engine. Their active and assertive roles in the Pentecostal church greatly influenced and shaped the spirituality and ethics of the Pentecostal church in Great Britain.<sup>962</sup>

Beyond the inner workings women brought their lived-experience to Pentecostalism and Pentecostal theology. The Pentecostal attributes of God portray Jesus as loving, ‘courting’ humans and the broken hearted when rejected, in effect as part of a ‘soteriological romance’, the deep relationship for which the woman strive.<sup>963</sup> To endow Jesus with female qualities is ‘far more radical and paradoxically more easily assimilable to the existing religious symbol system’.<sup>964</sup> Such an understanding is revolutionary when assessed against the patriarchal authority that operates in the Pentecostal church.

As is the case with Pentecostals in general, being Pentecostal distinguishes these women from other Christian women. In light of Pentecostalism’s openness to emotional and verbal expression, women are very attracted to Pentecostal churches. This was because the women made it this way.<sup>965</sup>

Despite being under-represented in church leadership, where women perceive discrimination, they can find fulfilment in extra-denominational activities if they wish to stay within the denomination.<sup>966</sup> Not all members of the male leadership in the NTCG were/are

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<sup>962</sup> New Testament Church of God began with seven members, 3 women and 4 men (see O. A. Lyesight, *Forward March*). Former executive council member Ira Brooks in this book *Another Gentleman to the Ministry* (circa 1980) quotes a ratio of 75 per cent women, 109.

<sup>963</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 201.

<sup>964</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 202.

<sup>965</sup> Edith Blumhofer, ‘Women in Pentecostalism,’ *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 57, no. 3-4 (2003): 120.

<sup>966</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 125.



necessarily against women leaders, for we cannot be sure whether part of the problem lay in the affiliation with an American church. Ira Brooks, a member of the national executive in the 1980s, designates a chapter in his book to 'Questions of the Ministry of Women', and there he states

Like race, the true value and position of women in black-led Pentecostalism has never been faced squarely. If the ruling hierarchy of these churches are guilty of racism in the way they relate to their coloured counterpart, then similarly, black leadership is guilty of sexism by its attitudes to female members collectively, but, especially those ladies who serve in active ministry of pastoring... Since constitutional polices and basic rules of ethics governing popular Pentecostalism are decreed by white councils, blacks are merely carrying out the designated polices of 'divide and rule'.<sup>967</sup>

One of the participants in my study stated that God was neither racist nor sexist, and despite any suffering women may go through, God is the all-sufficient one.

Bernice Martin argues that the impact of Pentecostalism on women's lives goes beyond 'emotional and verbal expression' and evidently beyond discrimination. Pentecostalism has transformed the lives of millions of women across the developing world for the better. However, the positive impact of Pentecostalism on the social status of women has gone unnoticed by the academic community, including feminist academics.<sup>968</sup> The numbers are difficult to explain given the apparent oppressive patriarchy of the Pentecostal church structure. Pentecostalism is not homogenous and therefore varies widely in the extent of formal authority and leadership allocated to women. As one end of the spectrum, many Oneness Pentecostal denominations strictly prohibit not only the ordination and licensure of women but also their exercise of any authority over men.<sup>969</sup> The prohibition of women in

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<sup>967</sup> Ira Brooks, *Another Gentleman to the Ministry*. (n.p., n.d.), 109.

<sup>968</sup> Bernice Martin, 'The Pentecostal Gender Paradox,' 57.

<sup>969</sup> Espinosa, 'Women in the Latino Pentecostal Movement,' 29. Espinosa states however that despite the prohibition women do exercise power and influence. He further argues that taking an imperialistic and reductionist view of agency ignores the millions of women who use creative strategies of empowerment and influence.

formal leadership is a stance supported by men and by women on the grounds that Jesus did not have male apostles and in light of Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:12.<sup>970</sup>

Writing about Latina Pentecostals Espinosa states that despite the opposition women have faced in ministry, they do not side with feminists.<sup>971</sup> Latina Pentecostals do not seek liberation from patriarchy because the Spirit-filled relationship with Jesus is true liberation a relationship which conveys real power. It is a power that transforms lives and communities and that power comes through the Holy Spirit. At the other end of the spectrum are those churches who have ordained women since the early years of the Pentecostal movement, such as the Assemblies of God.

From the writing of Gaston Espinosa and Nicole Toulis we observe that the liberation women experience is twofold. Nicole Toulis explains that Pentecostalism does not challenge the existing gender order of male dominance, but rather has the capacity to transform gender.<sup>972</sup> Drawing on studies conducted in the United States, Latin America and Italy, where 'ideas of patriarchy, machismo and a complex of honour and shame circumscribe the lives of women as wives, mothers, daughter and sisters', Toulis notes that Pentecostalism does not challenge roles as in the case of feminism, but perhaps more in line with womanism enhances the circumstances and status of women and by so doing present a challenge traditional male roles.<sup>973</sup> Men have literally been domesticated, and women have used Pentecostalism's religious discourse to rewrite the moral mandate upon which sexual relations and family life rest.<sup>974</sup> Elaine Foster suggests that men hold power only because of a silent/mutual collusion that exists with the women. Bernice Martin observes that

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<sup>970</sup> Espinosa, 'Women in the Latino Pentecostal Movement,' 31.

<sup>971</sup> Espinosa, 'Women in the Latino Pentecostal Movement,' 40.

<sup>972</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 221.

<sup>973</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 221.

<sup>974</sup> Martin, 'The Pentecostal Gender Paradox,' 54.

an unresolved tension remains between the *de jure* system of patriarchal authority in church and home and the *de facto* establishment of a way of life which decisively shifts the domestic and religious priorities in a direction that benefits women and children while morally restraining the traditional autonomy of the male and the selfish or irresponsible exercise of masculine power. The implicit deal seems to be that a substantive shift towards greater gender equality will be tolerated so long as women are not seen to be publicly exercising formal authority over men.<sup>975</sup>

Such collusion, writes Foster, diverts conflict, as the survival of the community is more important than who is in leadership. Bernice Martin terms this collusion the ‘gender paradox’. In my research Dana stated that though men are respected as heads, if a woman is connected to God she is able to control the man. Dana continues that if the woman takes her position in the home, then God is able to use her, causing her husband to listen to her and to love her, and she will be successful.<sup>976</sup> This explanation supports Foster’s collusion thesis but extends it to infer that God is also a part of the collusion.

### **7.3. BBPW Spirituality: A Challenge to Feminism and Black Theology**

The centrality of lived experience and Pentecostal spirituality as integral to that lived experience challenges feminist theory which overlooks the faith experiences of women because their experience is not in line with feminist assertions. This final section challenges feminism and its approach to the portrayal of all women as a homogenous group.

The ordinary theology of BBPW implicitly challenges feminist theory and feminist theology regarding the portrayal of BBPW. In their discussion of the inequalities they face, the women in this study did not mention gender discrimination in the church. Toulis corroborates that attitude.<sup>977</sup> The women involved in the study were Black working-to-middle

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<sup>975</sup> Martin, ‘The Pentecostal Gender Paradox,’ 54.

<sup>976</sup> Focus Group 5 – 18, September 2012

<sup>977</sup> Toulis, *Believing Identity*, 215.

class females. Their occupations ran from student to retired, from child-minder to accountant. Feminist descriptions have typically highlighted the hegemony of privileged white, Euro-American, middle-class feminists in their claims to characterise all women.<sup>978</sup> Thus the Black woman is invisible, again!

In her work *Changing the Subject*, Mary McClintock Fulkerson seeks to expose such ‘hegemonies’ along with their accompanying universalising claims. She promotes the study of ‘the real woman’ not ‘the woman’. In the identification of the real woman feminist assumptions are challenged, along with the ‘common methodological assumptions of feminist theological thinking as they function in academics [feminist] from hearing other women’. McClintock Fulkerson acknowledges the need to include the experiences of other women, including those whose practice of faith does not line up with prevailing though covert feminist assumptions.<sup>979</sup> The point is not to lose the subject ‘woman’ but to change the subject in the sense that the complex production of multiple identities becomes basic to our thinking.<sup>980</sup>

This work highlights the identity of the African-Caribbean Pentecostal woman and argues for her inclusion as one of ‘the real women’. Gilkes states that most Black female (and Latino) Christians would eschew feminism, noting that they are just trying to be good Christians not feminists.<sup>981</sup> Feminist research should then pay attention to women’s understanding of themselves. Changing the subject involves a move away from ‘women’s’ experience to ‘a theological feminist analytic of women’s discourse’. This necessitates the use of the logic of feminist criticism of the ‘politics of identity’, which refers to feminist

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<sup>978</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, ix.

<sup>979</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 7.

<sup>980</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 11.

<sup>981</sup> Gilkes, *If It Wasn't For the Women*, 10.

practices which assume a commonality among women – in nature or essence – a commonality which undergirds a claim for the universality of oppression of all women.<sup>982</sup> Changing the subject would highlight in this case the BBPW, taking seriously the role of location, where the woman is produced, and respecting her multiple identities. As such the Pentecostal woman is not then read as a victim of oppressed hegemonic patriarchy but as a ‘practitioner of faith with skills and pleasures as well as constraints and blindnesses’.<sup>983</sup>

Ursula King is also cognizant that the ‘fundamental paradox in feminist thought’ is ‘the normative status assigned to the experience of woman’. For King this normative status presents a twofold challenge. First, the identification of a satisfactory way of relating women’s specific experiences to human experience in general, and second, the emphasis that feminist thinkers place on the body. Women’s experience is different, distinct, incredibly rich and diverse, but in the past, the insight, knowledge and value of those experiences have generally remained hidden and unacknowledged. Human experience has predominately been described in terms of men’s experience, descriptions which have tended to subsume women’s experience. King states that through great pain and sorrow, feminists and/or women have come to realise that their experience must be looked at separately and on their own terms, this includes as Pentecostals. Although that interrogation will make our understanding of general human experience more complex, it will also makes it more complete.<sup>984</sup> Women’s experience in general and Black women’s experience in particular must be fully explored, known and described politically, culturally and theologically and should be integral to the total human experience.

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<sup>982</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 8.

<sup>983</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 11.

<sup>984</sup> King, *Women and Spirituality*, 79.<sup>985</sup> King, *Women and Spirituality*, 80.

The second challenge of the idea of normative women's experience emerges from the recognition that many feminist writers understand difference purely in terms of biology or with respect to giving birth or motherhood. Is the contemporary feminist concern as it relates to a normative women's experience too body-dependent? Despite feminism's 'radical critique and revolutionary intentions [it] still follows the major mould of current western thought with its excessive obsession with the body and sexuality to the exclusion of all other concerns'.<sup>985</sup> It may be the case that bodily existence is a primary source of woman's self-image and identity, but it is not the only source, particularly for minorities and those who live in the majority world. King states 'Spiritual and transformative power can be found in the body but only by going beyond it, by transcending it'.<sup>986</sup> Human experience is grounded in and bound by the conditions of physical existence, and women's experience, like all human experience, must be body transcendent rather than exclusively body-dependent.<sup>987</sup>

As stated above Black (and majority world) women have brought about a change in feminist awareness in that the movement is more mindful of the inherent racism that exists particularly in its academic framework. This awareness has been achieved by again highlighting the 'extraordinary pluralism and rich texture of women's lives' among women from different ethnic, racial and faith groups as well as within those groups.<sup>988</sup> King makes a useful distinction between feminine, female and feminist/womanist experiences, forms differentiated by the 'degree of self- reflection and critical awareness which accompany them'.<sup>989</sup> Feminine experiences are those aspects of life that have been referred to as

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<sup>985</sup> King, *Women and Spirituality*, 80.

<sup>986</sup> King, *Women and Spirituality*, 79.

<sup>987</sup> King, *Women and Spirituality*, 81.

<sup>988</sup> King, *Women and Spirituality*, 65, 79.

<sup>989</sup> King, King, *Women and Spirituality*, 60. King does not include womanist, but in light of the participants in this study, it seems fitting to include 'womanist' as a category.

feminine and which often reinforce women's otherness in relation to men; women experience themselves as objects rather than subjects. Female experience operates at the biological and personal level, conceiving, birthing and nurturing human life. Female experience may or may not necessitate reflection, unlike feminist/womanist experience which requires critical reflection.<sup>990</sup>

This work challenges not only feminist perspectives but also Black/womanist perspectives of the BBPW and her lived-experience. Bryan, Dadzie and Scarfe's book *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* was inspired by the 'gaping silence' in literature about British Black women. They observed that most of the documentation of the struggles of Black British women is undertaken by white historians, sociologists, feminists and black males.<sup>991</sup> The authors recognised that African-American women have begun to break that silence, but were cognisant that the African-American experience did not reflect the British Black female. They make the point that despite '[speaking] directly to our experience in Britain, [the African-American female experience] does not speak directly of it' [*emphasis mine*].<sup>992</sup> They argue that the Black woman has been portrayed romantically, as one able to cope with brutality and suffering, and although this depiction may have some heroic appeal, it does not convey the collective experience. Although I commend the contribution they made to literature regarding the experiences of Black women in Britain, Bryan, Dadzie and Scarfe do not attend to the role of Christianity, or religion for that matter, in the lives of nearly fifty-percent of Black women, nor do they recognise the life-transforming effect Pentecostalism has had on many of those women in Britain. The

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<sup>990</sup> King, King, *Women and Spirituality*, 60.

<sup>991</sup> Bryan, Dadzie and Scarfe, *The Heart of the Race*, 1.

<sup>992</sup> Bryan, Dadzie and Scarfe, *The Heart of the Race*, 1.

responses of the women in this study highlight the importance of dealing with Pentecostal faith and spirituality when examining life in Britain.

Black Christian expression in British society according to Robert Beckford was a form of resistance to English Christian hegemony which he proposes stemmed from the racial subordination experienced in the Caribbean.<sup>993</sup> I contend that this study indicates that resistance can be both ‘within’ and ‘without’. Affirmation of the self can also count as resistance. In the new British context, where discrimination and prejudice abounded, BBPW used the ‘language of resistance’. These women were used to resisting the prevailing culture, whether it took the form of slavery, colonialism, or class or gender discrimination, having done so since the time of enslavement, when the theology of the Black woman was attacked – either she was property and therefore less than human, or she was human and therefore could not be property. She had to decide which was true, the prevailing culture or what was in the Bible?<sup>994</sup> In England, distant from the supportive church community, she was able to draw on the Biblical teaching and the narrative, dramatic features of her faith. In this context her theology was actualised. It had to be broken and rescripted if it was to be relevant to her context.<sup>995</sup> Another example of her harnessing the ‘language of resistance’ was demonstrated in a two-fold tactic of first, the implementation of a Christian lifestyle with which she could identify both culturally and experientially, and second, the creation of an institution that met their needs in a context she had developed. Her resistance was not in the form of organised protests; confronting institution oppression is not the ultimate goal of those who feel limited by institutional barriers, and women have channelled their energies in other directions. The

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<sup>993</sup> Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 16.

<sup>994</sup> Katie Geneva Cannon, *Katie’s Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Soul of the Black Community* (New York, Continuum, 1998), 50.

<sup>995</sup> Cartledge, ‘Pentecostal Experience,’ 30.



tradition of self-help is embedded in British Pentecostal history, as we seen from examples such as the establishment of Saturday schools, senior citizen drop-in centres, nurseries, and pardners, which have served to work against outside forces of oppression through education, training, nurture and economics.<sup>996</sup> Women create and the ‘act of creating’ is in itself a demonstration of agency. Creativity is their form of resistance. In the midst of struggle, they create lives, substance and communities and develop opportunities for success.<sup>997</sup> They are in the business of uplifting, not just for personal advancement but also for the advancement of the Black community. Her faith, states Canon, was biblical faith, a dynamic faith which helped women devise strategies and tactics which would make them less susceptible to indignities received.<sup>998</sup>

Though underrepresented in ecclesial leadership ‘[African Caribbean] women have been primary agents of the Churches work, and its largest single group’.<sup>999</sup> Elaine Foster depicts this relationship as two pyramids superimposed over each other. One is inverted and the other upright. In the inverted pyramid lies spirituality – the life giving and sustaining nature of the church. Its inversion represents the numbers of women actively involved in the spiritual life and upkeep of the church. The upright one represents the patriarchy and hierarchy that exists in the leadership structure of the Pentecostal church. However the powerbase is maintained due to male/female in silent or mutual collusion. Martin identifies the unresolved tension between the *de jure* system of patriarchal authority in church and home and the *de facto* way of life which decisively shifts the domestic and religious priorities

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<sup>996</sup> A pardner is a system which works on the principle that each member would place a specific amount of money in the ‘bank’ every month. After a specific period of time each member would be able to withdraw not only their contribution but the contribution of all members to take care of their specific needs.

<sup>997</sup> Frederick, *Between Sundays*, 7.

<sup>998</sup> Cannon, *Katie’s Canon*, 52.

<sup>999</sup> Beckford, *Jesus is Dread*, 27; Foster, ‘Inverted Pyramid,’ 45, 49.

in a direction that benefits women and children while morally restraining not only traditional male autonomy but behaviours such as infidelity which impact the lives of women and children and the family in general.<sup>1000</sup> Implicitly it seems that a substantive shift towards greater gender equality will be tolerated so long as women are not seen to be publicly exercising formal authority over men.<sup>1001</sup> These collusions, states Foster, divert conflict. Foster uses the word cunning to describe the women's use of power which can be understood in a pejorative sense. I use the word 'creative' which I believe is more empowering. Creativity is the preferred strategy over overt male/female confrontation to maintain equanimity. The survival of the community is more important than who is in leadership. There is a selflessness that comes from what BBPW see as a 'calling', and as hence their God-given responsibility to work with 'grace and humility'.

Black theologians such as Beckford and Reddie are critical of the Black Church in general and the Pentecostal church in particular for being a shelter and for not engaging in issues of social justice. Their concern is with the 'broader and more complex way of describing radical transformation and liberation', unlike, it would seem, the Black Pentecostal Church.<sup>1002</sup> However, despite being aware of the 'oppression' and 'sexual discrimination' as males with the power of patriarchy and aside from acknowledging that women make up the greater number of the Black Church, they have said little else about women's contributions. In essence and albeit unobtrusively, they too have overlooked and undermined the contribution that Black women have made to the BBPC and to British society.

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<sup>1000</sup> Martin, 'The Pentecostal Gender Paradox,' 54.

<sup>1001</sup> Martin, 'The Pentecostal Gender Paradox,' 54.

<sup>1002</sup> Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, 5.

#### 7.4. Conclusion

Pentecostal spirituality as experience is an integrated, conscious and deliberate way of living which pervades the whole life of BBPW. That BBPW way of living has been overlooked by academia, yet through lived experience, BBPW's relationship with God develops beyond conversion in a relationship in which women learn to trust God despite adversities in life.

Pentecostal spirituality has been used for resistance and also to empower within an African Caribbean Christian consciousness. African Caribbean Christian consciousness as resistance and the empowering of African Caribbean women are demonstrated in various ways. First, as the carriers of tradition and values, women were instrumental in the development of the African Caribbean Christian consciousness. In a Pentecostal church context although males were officially in authority women both because of their number and commitment built and maintained the infrastructure of the Pentecostal church. They were responsible for the teaching Sunday school, church administration and organised and catered for meetings and conventions. Women were more frequently exhorters, evangelists, or lead worship, thereby 'encouraging and prompting deeper worship and praise in order to experience manifestation of the Spirit amongst the believers'.<sup>1003</sup> The pastors' need for people to work in these areas and the desire of women to do that work engender support and encouragement of female spirituality. Second, the women implemented a religious life style which was the result of an appropriation of Christianity, with which they could identify both culturally and experientially. Finally, they created an institution that met their needs in a context they developed, in this case the Pentecostal church

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<sup>1003</sup> Alexander, 'A Mouse in a Jungle,' 94; Elaine Foster, 'Inverted Pyramid,' 49.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

The history of African-Caribbean women has been for the most part brutal. My intention with this study has been not to modulate that suffering. However to present the women purely as victims to my mind would once again downplay the positive contributions they have made. The role of victim does not highlight their resilience and tenacity but rather eulogises the system that was instrumental in that suffering. As a critical insider, I have taken seriously the role of Christianity as expressed in Pentecostalism in the lived experience of the participants. Christianity in general and Pentecostalism in particular is expressed as central and instrumental to the women's lives, rather than a stumbling block to their emancipation as suggested by some feminist writers. From the days of slavery to the early Windrush years and beyond the Christianity and later the tenets of Pentecostalism was liberating.<sup>1004</sup> Women's discourse is central and relevant in this work and value is conferred on their narratives which include theological concepts that they have assimilated and applied as they have deemed relevant for their needs and purposes.<sup>1005</sup>

This research project represents an original contribution to the body of practical-theological empirical research in Pentecostal studies. I began this thesis by presenting the motivation behind this work – the women themselves. Their story has been left untold, but their presence has influenced the religious landscape of the United Kingdom, yet without receiving academic attention. The specific focus of the study is on the spirituality of BBPW,

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<sup>1004</sup> Brusco, 'Gender and Power,' 78; McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*. 2.

<sup>1005</sup> Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 18; Edward Farley, *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on Church's ministry*, (Westminster John Knox Press: Kentucky, 2003), 3; Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 29.

and specifically on how lived experience is related to spirituality. The aim was to explicate the features of BBPW's lived experience using inductive empirical methodology.

Based on the findings of this study I advance this thesis: ***Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience develops from life situations but can also inform life experiences, which in turn contributes to and further facilitates growth in a woman's relationship with God.*** *Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience* is separate and distinct from but related to the crisis events of conversion, sanctification and Spirit-baptism and is part of an integrated lifestyle that is everyday life. Pentecostal spirituality is further developed with the practices of Bible reading, prayer, corporate worship, community and tongue speaking.

Before expanding further, I provide a summary of the work that has supported the thesis. As the presentation of the problem in chapter one suggests, any consideration of the spirituality of BBPW must value both the voices of women and their faith as Pentecostals. Chapter two offers an analysis of the methods and principles that meet that requirement. Rooted in theology the sub-discipline of practical theology which as a method of inquiry begins and ends with Christian practice, is particularly suitable for this project. Further, empirical theology, a practical-theological approach, integrates social scientific methods to elucidate theory from the beliefs and practices of individuals and religious groups. Empirical theology is based on the work of Van der Ven, who devised the empirical-theological cycle as a framework for theological research. Although the empirical-theological cycle informed this work, it was adopted as a heuristic tool which guided the process rather than drive or dictate it. Chapter three discusses the history and spirituality of BBPW by tracing the journey of the Black woman from her original homeland of Africa to Jamaica and on to England. It also explores the development of Christianity and Pentecostalism in Jamaica. Chapter four explores and analyses Christian spirituality generally, introducing three ways in which the concept of spirituality is understood and applied, and presenting the concept in a

contemporary context in which it has such a broad application that it affects almost every aspect of life, including academic research. While Chapter four explores spirituality more generally, it does not overtly reflect the spirituality of BBPW; chapter five takes the discussion in that direction by constructing a Pentecostal spirituality based on literature, one which more closely reflects the history and perspective of BBPW. Chapter six is a methodology chapter in which a qualitative approach is taken to the descriptive-exploratory of this task. It provides a description of the sampling, recruitment and conduct of the focus groups, and data analysis. Chapter seven reflects on the practical-theological dialectic. Chapter eight, the current chapter, concludes with my thesis and recommendations.

This work brought to mind Peter Brueghel's painting *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent*, in which so much is going on that it is easy to overlook individual characters in the painting unless they are pointed out or time is taken to really study them. And without an interpretation of the context the significance of the characters and their actions can be missed. So it is with BBPW, theirs is a long history which has had multiple influences. Like Brueghel's painting their history is not a liner narrative, for it has been punctuated by slavery, migration and discrimination however a 'soulforce', part of their *African Cultural Consciousness*, has been ever present, which has helped them survive adversities. Like a number of the characters in the painting, these women have always been there, but attention has not been directed to their character or its significance. This work does precisely that. This research project contributes to the body of Pentecostal studies in Britain and in the global setting by highlighting the significance of BBPW to the Pentecostal movement. From the ordinary theology presented by the women in the focus groups, there is an indication that Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience helps BBPW navigate their personal situations whilst deepening their relationship with God. That spirituality is instigated by conversion and is dependent upon the woman's desire for a deeper relationship. There are

indeed parallels with sanctification, which is defined as a work of grace, but while the goal is the same – closer relationship with God – a major difference is that spirituality as lived experience gives insight into how that goal is achieved and further it is not eschatologically motivated but rather a way of being in and coping with the here and now.

I have a number of recommendations for both the church and the academy. First: to the BMPC I recommend that in a more formal way women and their experiences be brought in from the periphery and be integrated into the centre of the church as spiritual formation directors. Is there a way in which their life experience can be deemed religious and therefore of important to spiritual formation?<sup>1006</sup> In my nurturing and development as a Pentecostal, women have been instrumental in mediating the reality of what it means to be a Pentecostal follower of Jesus. Unknown to many of them, they have ‘walked the way of faith and paved a way leaving some signs – landmarks, cairns or marks on a map – for other women including myself to follow’.<sup>1007</sup> Such direction is necessary for a generation who seek authenticity. Formal opportunities should be made available from them to present their ordinary theology, by providing space in which they can (1) articulate their life experiences and (2) reflect on their life experiences. The lessons learned on the journey of experience can be shared with others in their spiritual quest. This approach would be in line with the orality that characterises Pentecostalism.

Second: Rarely is Christianity, in the Western mind at least, associated with spirituality. Pentecostal spirituality as lived experience can provide such a framework, particularly if there are directors to help guide. In the Western world there is a hunger, by the church, the dechurched and the unchurched, for the spiritual in all its forms. Religions that are relatively unfamiliar to the Western world – Buddhism, Sufism or the religions of India,

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<sup>1006</sup> See page 11.

<sup>1007</sup> Slee, *Women's Faith Development*, 2.

for example – are associated with the a quest to find happiness and/or the self. Pentecostal spirituality is not just concerned with prayer, worship and speaking in tongues, for such practices are integrated into the believer’s whole life and spirituality is consciously pursued as an on-going enterprise through the power of the Holy Spirit. On the world scene of spiritualities, Pentecostal spirituality has something to offer.

Third, the academy has the capacity for further empirical study that look specifically at the influence of women in the church using qualitative and quantitative methods. The current project utilised induction and was exploratory in character. A deductive phase could consider the consistency of the inductive phase, for the deductive-explanatory phase investigates the validity of the interpretation and meaning that the emerging theoretical constructs ascribe Pentecostal Spirituality as experience. The deductive-explanatory phase would therefore provide a cross-validation process which considers the consistency of observations made in the exploratory case study, which can then be confirmed or otherwise by the evaluative case studies, and the theory that attempts to explain them.<sup>1008</sup>

Fourth, I recommend that a comparative or standalone study of men in the BMC be undertaken. I am not aware of any study to date that has explored historical or contemporary ‘ordinary’ male Pentecostal spirituality and the similarities and differences that exist. Wendy Wright asks ‘do men and women know God differently because they are differently embodied?’ While she explores the answer theoretically through literature, here is a topic that is open to empirical-theological exploration.<sup>1009</sup>

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<sup>1008</sup> Samuel Muindi, *The Nature and Significance of Prophecy in Pentecostal-Charismatic Experience: An Empirical-Biblical Study* (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2013), 407.

<sup>1009</sup> Wendy Wright, ‘Woman Body, Man Body: Knowing God,’ in *Women’s Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development*, ed. Joann Wolski Conn (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1996), 83.



Finally, this work was conducted ‘in my backyard’, as I have repeatedly acknowledged. Another comparative study could be done by a non-Pentecostal. The data would surely be similar, but might the interpretation be different, and also the choice of literature for discourse?<sup>1010</sup> And might such a study highlight Pentecostal blind spots?

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<sup>1010</sup> John Cresswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (California: Sage, 2003), 184.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1** Church of God Declaration of Faith
- Appendix 2** NTCG Empowerment Conference Programme
- Appendix 3a** Research information/consent sheet
- Appendix 3b** Research Consent form
- Appendix 3c** Research Personal information form
- Appendix 4** Topic Guide for Focus Group

## **Appendix 1**

### **Declaration of Faith**

The Church of God believes the whole Bible to be completely and equally inspired and that it is the written Word of God. The Church of God has adopted the following Declaration of Faith as its standard and official expression of its doctrine.

We Believe:

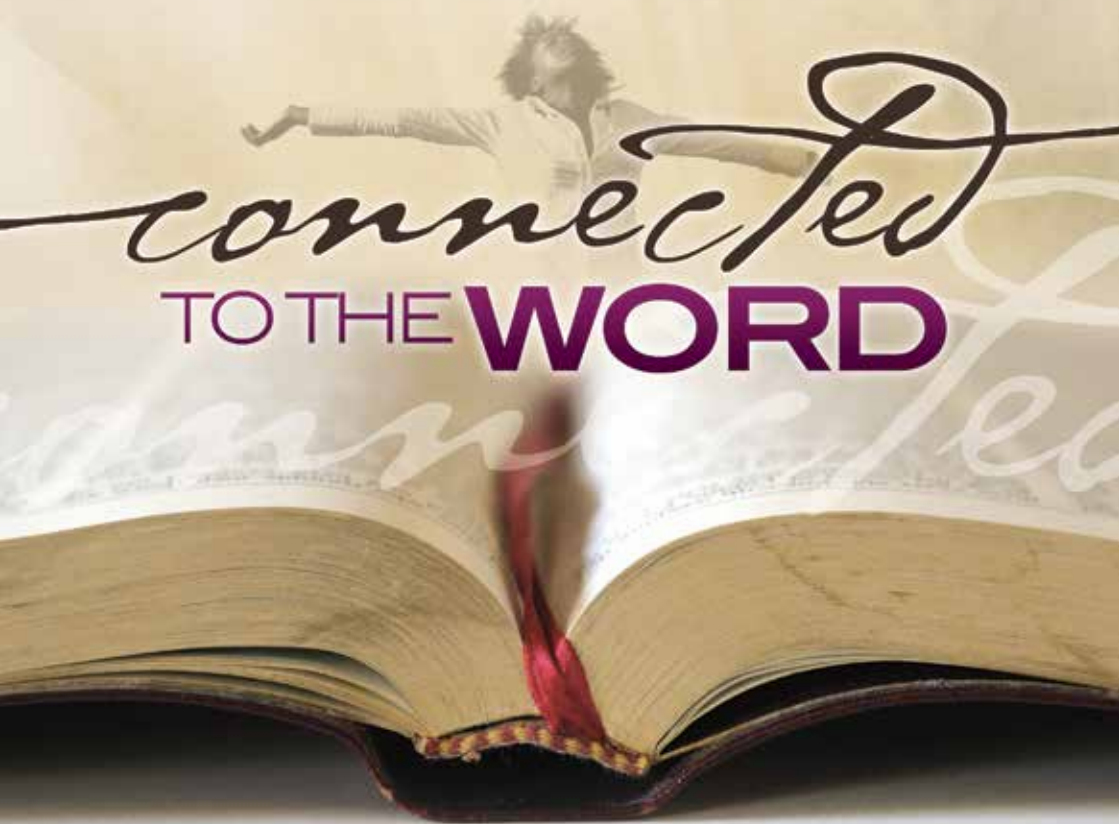
- In the verbal inspiration of the Bible.
- In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
  - That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. That Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. That He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor.
  - That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins.
  - That justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.
    - In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost.
    - Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people.
    - In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.
    - In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
    - In water baptism by immersion, and all who repent should be baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
    - Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement.
    - In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet.
    - In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years.
    - In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous, and eternal punishment for the wicked.

## **Appendix 2 Empowerment Conference Programme**

New Testament Church of God England & Wales • National Women's Ministries Department

**WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE**

**1ST - 3RD OCTOBER 2010**



Bethel Convention Centre, Kelvin Way, West Bromwich, B70 7JW



## GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

# Mrs Millicent Brown & Executive Board Members

It is my honour and privilege to extend sincere greetings to our Administrative Bishop, Presidents, Co-ordinators, Secretaries, Delegates, Ministers and guests who have come to share with us as we Connect to the Word.

In recent months the words "Economic Downturn" have become prominent in our everyday conversations. These two words speak of uncertainty, rising unemployment, negative equity, falling assets and perhaps worse of all these words convey fear. People have become afraid of what might happen because of what is, in effect, a global crisis.

As Christians we are not immune from social and economic factors. However, we cannot allow ourselves to live in fear. Godly fear is to be encouraged but to live our lives fearing what tomorrow might bring and wondering whether or not we will be able to pay the next bill or buy the next meal is against God's principles for His people.

His word declares in Psalm 37:25 "*...I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread.*"

Throughout the scriptures starting in Genesis 15:1, we are admonished to "**Fear not**", St. Luke 8:50 tells us "**Fear not: believe only**", St. Luke 12:7 says "**Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.** Isaiah 54:4 states "**Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame...**" Isaiah 35:4 "*Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, **fear not**...*" With so many positive declarations and promises from the Word of God, I encourage each of you to trust God for today and tomorrow. Study the Word, live in the Word, know the Word; it will give you the assurance that you need to confidently trust God in all times and seasons. "*And now my daughter, **fear not**; I will do to thee all that thou requirest...*" Ruth 3:11.

**Have a blessed weekend.**

## “Your Connectivity Determines Your Productivity”



## GREETINGS FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE BISHOP

Rev Dr. Eric A Brown<sub>FRSA</sub>

It gives me the greatest of pleasure to greet First Lady Brown, National Women's Ministry President, the National Women's Board and all delegates to this your 8th annual Women's Empowerment Conference. I do so in the name that is above all names, Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God.

I know the passion you and your team carry for this ministry because I hear it in your prayers, at your fasting sessions, in your telephone conversations and in our frequent discussions. I am absolutely convinced that this ministry cannot be stopped and that it is destined for success because you have made it your mantra to Stay Connected to the Word and you have set the glory of God as your highest priority. Therefore I can confidently say to you, don't you worry about the global economic downturn. Jesus told us over 2000 years ago, *"Do not be worried about what you will drink, nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Who of you by being worried can add a single hour to your life?"* *"Your heavenly Father knows that you need all those things, so do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself..."* (Matthew 6:25, 27, 32 & 34).

Our responsibility is to stay connected to the Word and prepare for the upturn. *"Go borrow vessels at large for yourselves from all your neighbours, even empty vessels; do not get a few and you shall go in and shut the doors behind you and your sons, and pour out into all these vessels, and you shall set aside what is full."* (2 Kings 4:3,4).

I say to you in the name of the Lord, stay connected to the Word and go prepare for the upturn!

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## GREETINGS & WELCOME FROM SECRETARY TO THE WOMEN'S MINISTRIES BOARD

# Mrs Cynthia Spence

It is indeed a pleasure and a privilege to once again, on behalf of the Women's Executive Board to welcome all our guests and delegates to our Annual National Women's Empowerment Conference.

We also extend a very special welcome to our Administrative Bishop, members of the National Executive Council, all Ministers, Presidents, Coordinators and Secretaries.

We especially welcome our guest speakers, Evangelist Joycelyn Barrett from the USA, Rev. Ruthlyn Bradshaw and of course Rev. Mrs Millicent Brown, Director of Women's Ministries, our workshop presenters, worship team and musicians, we thank you all for accepting our invitation to minister throughout this weekend.

We are expecting a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit into the lives of believers and to those who need Christ as their personal Saviour, our cups will be full and running over as we open our mind and our heart to the Word of God.

The theme for this year's conference is "**CONNECTED TO THE WORD**" we need to be truly connected to the word. Paul's writing to the Colossians (3 v 16) admonishes to "*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom*". Unless we know the Word we cannot apply it, so I encourage you to get into the WORD.

God bless you richly.



# General Information

## PRAYER

We anticipate a mighty move of God as we join in the Morning Glory Prayer and Praise. The session on Saturday will commence at 9.00 am and at 9.30 am on Sunday morning in the main auditorium.

## THEFT

The National women's Ministries Department will not accept responsibility for loss/theft of any property.

## FIRST AID

First Aid will be available throughout the weekend. Should you require assistance please ask at the registration desk.

## COUNSELLORS

Qualified Counsellors will be available throughout the Conference. If you wish to share any concern or just require a listening ear please ask at the reception desk.

## OTHER INFORMATION

It is possible that during this Conference, your child/young person below the age of 18 may be photographed or recorded. The Women's Ministries Department will take all possible steps to ensure

that these images are used solely for the purpose for which they are intended which is the promotion of the Conference.

## NOTE TO EXHIBITORS

We would respectfully ask all exhibitors to close their booth whilst the conference is in session.

### ACTION UPON HEARING THE FIRE ALARM!

- › Upon the sounding of the emergency tone, immediately stop any ongoing activities.
- › Stay in your location and wait for instructions from the Fire Marshall or Stewards.
- › After receiving the evacuation order, evacuate the building in an orderly manner to the assembly area which is located at the BCC car park, front entrance.
- › Use the nearest and safest exit.
- › Proceed to the predetermined emergency assembly area.
- › Wait for further instructions.

The Fire Alarm makes a "Whoop Whoop" sound followed by a recorded voice message

# Mission Statement

The Women's Ministries Department will endeavour to assist women in developing a deeper understanding and relationship in God through worship, fellowship, training and leisure, and to enhance our relationship with the wider community by welcoming other cultures and organisations.

Through the Conferences and Retreats offered by the Women's Ministries Department we aim to:

- Educate and Inform
- Empower & Equip
- Encourage socialization
- Train
- Fellowship & Network
- Worship
- Build confidence
- Motivate
- Build self-esteem
- Mentor
- Rest
- Expose others to different lifestyles
- Disciple each other
- Utilize skills and qualities of our leaders

The Women's Ministries Department continues to be guided by the principles of The **BIG MOVE**... This programme is our church's strategy for transformation and impact.

**B**uild Confident, committed leaders

**I**nforming and impacting our youth

**G**rowing healthy Churches

**M**obilizing our Church for Ministry and Missions

**O**ffering Hope to our Communities

**V**aluing our women and our men

**E**vangelizing our community and our world





GUEST SPEAKER

## Evangelist Joycelyn Barnett

Joycelyn Barnett has had an intense desire to help others reach their potential and live a balanced life through the word of God for many years. Born into a family of preachers and leaders, her path to the pulpit was long and winding. Her call to ministry has provided an extensive journey of preaching and teaching spanning the globe.

Evangelist Barnett earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Herbert Lehman College, Bronx, New York. After following the urging of the Holy Spirit, she moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida where she began her eight - year career as an educator, teaching Social Studies and History to middle school students. She also graduated from the Church of God Ministerial Internship Program. Evangelist Barnett is an avid student of the Word.

She has preached and taught the gospel throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. She has delivered her message through the mediums of television, radio and the written word.

Her ministry includes: Anointed Psalmist, Prophet, Teacher, Preacher, Old Testament Scholar, Ministry to youth and to the other parts of the body of Christ. She is the author of several books and pamphlets including: "More than a Conquer, A Guide to Spiritual Warfare and The Loneliness of Leadership". She has also written plays and manuals. She has conducted numerous leadership seminars, revivals, conferences and crusades.

Proud Grandmother to Aiden Anthony, three adult children, Kori, Christopher and Angela, know her as Mom. She is married to Elder Terrance Barnett where they work corporately in ministry effectively, **"HEALING THE HARVEST"** to the nations.

Evangelist Barnett feels that she is called in this last day and age to expand the church's awareness of the magnitude of the harvest. She is committed to bringing the passion for the harvest to each and every place she ministers.



GUESTTEACHER

## Rev Mrs Ruthlyn Bradshaw

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Rev Bradshaw was born in Montserrat and emigrated at an early age to Boston U.S.A where she received most of her formal education and early theological training. Ruthlyn is a gifted communicator and counsellor. Through her anointed ministry she brings healing, restoration, and empowerment to the body of Christ. She is widely acknowledged and frequently sought after. She travels extensively, ministering both nationally and internationally. Having gained a masters degree in Applied Theology at Spurgeons College in the UK, she is presently pursuing her doctorate at the same college.

She is the senior pastor for two branches of the New Life Assembly Fellowship of Churches. A visiting lecturer at Spurgeon's college, a lecturer at the Institute of Theology and Christian counselling, as well as a faculty member and lecturer at the NLA Purpose Driven School.

Rev Ruthlyn Bradshaw also writes sermons for the College of Preachers journal. She is married and has three children and one grandson.



CONFERENCE HOST

## Rev Mrs Millicent Brown

Millicent made a personal commitment to the Lord at the age of 15. She later became actively involved with the New Testament Church of God, Catford, where she was supported by Christian parents. It was from this church that she met and married Eric Brown, the present Administrative Bishop. She is confident that God has blessed them with each other and is sure that their friendship and respect for each other has been an important part of their sound, stable and blissful marriage. Shortly after their 2nd anniversary in 1973, she moved with her husband to Germany where he commenced his theological training.

She has worked with her husband in five separate pastorates in London and worked side by side with him for eight years when he served as National Director of Youth and Christian Education.

In 2002 Millicent was inducted as the Director of Women's Ministries of the New Testament Church of God, England and Wales. God has blessed this ministry under her leadership and she derives immense satisfaction in seeing the lives of women transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Her desire is to impact and inspire women to realize their potential and then use them to enhance God's Kingdom. Millicent has a deep and passionate love for God and His people, and is confident that her close relationship with God will sustain her in difficult times. Millicent has a BA (Hons) degree in Sociology.

Millicent has three sons, Leon, Wayne and Julien, three daughters-in Law, Patricia, Michelle and Rachel and three grand-children Jude-Elliott, Mia-Gabrielle and Reya Naomi. She is particularly grateful to God that all her children are committed Christians and involved in Ministry.

# FRIDAY

- 3.00 pm REGISTRATION
- 5.00 pm Buffet/Reception
- 7.00 pm Worship & Praise
- Official Opening of Conference
- Celebration & Praise
- Ministry of the Word**  
*Evangelist Joycelyn Barnett*
- 9.30 pm **CLOSE OF SESSION**

# SATURDAY

- 9.00 am Morning Glory Prayer & Praise  
*Rev Sharon Miller & Mrs Yvette Rudder*
- A Word about Prayer:  
**Making the Right Connection in Prayer**  
*Mrs Pat Ferguson*
- 10.00 am **SCHOOL OF MINISTRY:**  
**Abundant Life in the Word**  
*Rev Mrs Ruthlyn Bradshaw*
- 11.00 am **WORKSHOPS:**  
**Connected to the Word – not the World (5-12 years)**  
*Miss Brenda Jennings*
- Hide the Word (13-17 years)**  
*Mrs Cassandra Gray*
- Its Precious – Hide It (18-24 years)**  
*Mrs Denise Stephenson*
- Sexuality and the Word (25 +)**  
*Mrs Dawn-Marie Bowen*
- Connected to Succeed in Education and Business**  
*Ms Ellin Joseph & Ms Grace Alalade*
- Kingdom Connection**  
*Rev Ms Angela Palmer*

# SUNDAY

## 12.45 – 3.00 pm LUNCH

- 3.00 pm : Exceptional Women's & Sojourner Truth Awards
- 5.00 pm : Worship & Celebration
- Update on **SHAPE**
- Reflection/Testimony
- Ministry of the Word:**  
*Evangelist Joycelyn Barnett*
- 7.30 pm : **CLOSE OF SESSION**

- 9.30 am Morning Glory Prayer & Praise  
*Rev Sharon Miller & Mrs Yvette Rudder*

A Word on Prayer:  
**Making the Right Connection in Prayer**  
*Mrs Pat Ferguson*

- 10.30 am **SCHOOL OF MINISTRY:**  
**Abundant Life in the Word**  
*Rev Mrs Ruthlyn Bradshaw*

- 11.00am Worship and Praise

**Ministry of the Word:**  
*Rev Mrs Millicent Brown*

## 1.00 – 3.00 pm LUNCH

- 3.00 pm Worship & Celebration

Reflection/Testimony

**Ministry of the Word:**  
*Evangelist Joycelyn Barnett*

- 7.00 pm **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

# School of Ministry and Workshop Information *in brief*

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The school of Ministry and the workshops are designed to enrich the lives of all in attendance. The children will focus on the theme **“Connected to the Word – not the World”**. They will be helped to understand that the Word of God is powerful and has an impact upon every life choice they make. They will be helped to understand that connection to the Word is much more beneficial than connecting to the World.

**Hide the Word** is a direct statement to our young women to encourage them to Hide the Word of God in their hearts as it will not only keep them from sinning against God, but it will comfort, strengthen and guide them in every area of their lives. Knowledge of the Word is also vital for defending the gospel when they are confronted with scepticism.

**“It’s Precious – Hide It”** will help our young women understand what precious commodity the Word of God is and the fact that precious things are cared for. They will also understand that if they value the Word of God; they will be cared for, protected and preserved by it.

**“Sexuality and the Word”** is designed to support our young women’s understanding of the Word of God in line with their sexuality. It is to help them understand that all sexual activity outside of marriage is forbidden by God. It is important also that our unmarried women, not least those who are new to the faith, be given guidelines and support how to conduct themselves in order to avoid falling into new or former sexual practices.

The education and business workshop under the title **“Connected to Succeed in Education and Business”** will help participants make the right choices in education, training and employment and will also help them understand the concepts which are necessary in building effective businesses and the part education plays in ensuring success. Those already involved in business will understand that productivity is the cornerstone of business success and to succeed in these areas demands commitment, dedication and connectivity.

**The Kingdom Connection** session will help delegates understand the importance of connecting to the Kingdom through prayer and fasting and the study of the Word. Whenever we pray the Lord’s Prayer we declare the Kingdom of God – “Thy Kingdom Come”. It is through Kingdom connection that we are able to keep standing even in the face of opposing odds.

Our teaching sessions **“Abundant Life in the Word”** will help us understand that abundant life is not primarily related to the things we possess but rather to the intimate relationship we have with God. Instead of a static life, our relationship with God is continually growing and allowing us to enter into that life that possesses all of God’s virtues. Provision is made for very person who accepts Christ as Lord to live an abundant life. Abundant Life is realized when believers understand that nothing can suppress God’s Grace.





**MISS BRENDA P JENNINGS**

**B**renda is a member of the New Testament Church of God Cathedral of Praise Wood Green and was the Children's Church Coordinator for several years. She loves children and has been working in childcare for over 15 years. She is currently the Manager of a London based Community Nursery.

She is actively involved in promoting early year's education primarily working with the black community, building a support network for parents/carers, enabling them to have a positive impact on their children, educationally and socially.

Over the years she has organised several community projects such as parent workshops, achievement awards, cultural shows which actively involved the community and she has successfully ran a youth project for children between the ages five and seventeen years of age.

Brenda has been granted life -time membership of the Millennium Award Fellowship as a result of doing a project on games children play in Burkino-Faso. Brenda has a passion for missionary work particularly with children and has been involved in overseas missions such as setting up children and youth ministries and organising community projects. Brenda is now currently involved in the Single Adults Ministry.



**MRS CASSANDRA GRAY**

**C**assandra Gray is a successful, focused and driven young woman, who is passionate about young people understanding who they are in God. Cassandra mentors many young women from all walks of life and wants to see women raise their aspirations and achieve their full potential.

From an un-churched background, she became a Christian at the age of 20 after God responded to her cry for help. God not only proved Himself to Cassandra but revealed His plans for her, taking her life in a completely new direction. God placed Cassandra at Herne Hill NTCG where she developed a love for the Word and a greater hunger for God. She was desperate to grow spiritually and regularly attended bible study and prayer meetings. During her time at Herne Hill, Cassandra served as a youth leader, Sunday school teacher and evangelism team member.

After getting married in July 2009, Cassandra moved to Wolverhampton where she now lives with her husband Philip and attends Harvest Temple NTCG. Here she serves as the coordinator for 'Kingdom Builders' which is a youth church for 11 – 15 year olds. Cassandra has a Bsc Honours degree in Managerial and Administrative Studies, a PGCE in Business Education and has completed the Young Leaders Programme run by Derek Prince Ministries. Cassandra has taught in several mixed comprehensive secondary schools in South London and is currently the Head of ICT and Business Studies at an outstanding girl's school in Birmingham.



### MRS DAWN-MARIE BOWEN

Is Dawn-Marie Bowen was born in Jamaica (Montego Bay) and after graduating with a Bachelors Degree (Hons) from the University of the West Indies, she came to the UK in 1993 to pursue Postgraduate Studies in Actuarial Science at City University, London. She acquired a Masters of Science Degree in that discipline and has been working as an Actuarial Analyst for the last 13 years.

She gave her life to the Lord from the age of 12, and has been actively serving in the church over the ensuing years of her spiritual journey. She currently serves in the capacity of president of the Family Training Hour at West Croydon and is also a member of the Ladies Board. She has also lectured on a number of occasions at their annual district ladies seminars.

Sis Dawn is married to Richard Bowen for nearly 22 years and is the mother of an eleven year old son and an eight year old daughter.

Sis Dawn advocates that our lives should always be connected to and intertwined with God's Word as it speaks to every facet of our life.

### MRS DENISE STEPHENSON

Denise is a member of The New Testament Church of God, Brooks' Bar, Manchester where she currently serves as the Sunday School Superintendent.



She is married to Neville Stephenson and the Lord has blessed them with two wonderful children, Ebony aged 11 and William aged 9. Denise obtained an Honours Degree in Social Sciences and is a Solicitor practising in the area of Family Law.

She enjoys walking, eating out and quiet evenings in with her husband.

She has a passion for the study of God's word and desire to see God's people devoting themselves to the word and its application.



### MS ELLIN JOSEPH

Ellin is a Service Manager for ECSL (Enfield Education, Children's Service & Leisure), Education Welfare Service. She has worked in the Local Authority sector for 23 years, previously in Hertfordshire Children Services as an Area Child Protection Liaison Officer. Ellin manages the Education Welfare Service, which includes the management of the Child Employment & Entertainment, Children Missing Education and the Educational welfare of children and young people disaffected within the educational system. The service is responsible for parental prosecutions either through the Magistrates or Family Courts. Ellin has a postgraduate ME'd in Community Education.

Ellin is Director for Evangelism for the District of Luton. Ellin love to sing and to Worship the Lord. She is at her happiest when in the company of her immediate and church family.

## MS GRACE ALALADE



Grace Alalade has many years experience in both IT and business and has worked in the public and private sectors. She joined Shell in 1998 and since then has taken on various roles within the company in Information Technology, Organization Design and Change Management. Her current role involves leading change, training and communications for 350 global staff for the Aviation and Marine businesses.

As the former Chair of the Shell African Network (an employee network for staff of African/Caribbean heritage), Grace grew the membership from 90 to 300 members in 3 years. Under her leadership, the Network was the finalist for Race For Opportunity's Mentoring Award category in 2009.

Grace is on the speaking circuit and past engagements have included:

- World Diversity Leadership Summit, Prague, 2006
- Understanding and Engaging with Diasporas, Wilton Park, West Sussex, 2007
- Learning Conference, Ashridge Business School, Herts, 2009

Grace Alalade attends Rochester NTCG in Kent. In previous ministry roles, she has served as a Youth Leader, provided strategic direction on a Christian National Youth Committee and led prophetic creative ministries with young people.

Grace is also the Founder of The Dream Bigger Company, which delivers the Pathway 2 Excellence Framework training for churches and focuses on leadership development for Christian Leaders.

## REV ANGELA PALMER



Rev. Angela Palmer is the Associate Pastor and Women's Ministry President at the New Testament Church of God Northampton.

A graduate of Overstone Theological College, she also gained a Bachelors of Ministry Degree through the European Theological Seminary. Rev Palmer is also a graduate from the Gloucestershire College of Art and Design. She continues to use her artistic abilities, and is currently engaged in a mission's project using her water colour paintings that are sold to raise funds for benevolent projects.

No stranger to the conference floor, and an avid speaker, she has ministered in women's conferences at home and abroad. She has a God given call and passion for Missions and has travelled for this purpose to Uganda, India, Kenya and Jamaica.

Rev. Angela regards bringing up Godly and successful children as one of her greatest achievements. A mother of two Adult children Tanya and Richard, a son in law Michael and three grand children Christian, Charlotte and Cieran she regards them as 'God's gifts.'

Receiving a specific call to minister to women, her aim is to help in propelling women to achieve beyond their wildest expectation.



# Single Adult Cruise

## Carnival Destiny

5 Day Eastern Caribbean

4-9 April, 2011



Reggie  
Dabbs



Judy  
Jacobs



Preston  
Centuola

### Outside Stateroom

\$585 - Quad  
\$630 - Triple  
\$685 - Double

### Inside Stateroom

\$530 - Quad  
\$580 - Triple  
\$620 - Double

[www.ntcg.org.uk/sam](http://www.ntcg.org.uk/sam)

1. CruiseCritic will charge a credit card service fee of 3% and the service fee is non-refundable. We will accept cheques, money orders along with  
a/c. 2. Cancellation after 60/111 package cost is totally non-refundable. 3. When making payments by cc, please complete the cc authorisation  
form. CC authorisation may be obtained on the CruiseCritic & Vacation Center's website [www.cruiseCritic.com](http://www.cruiseCritic.com)

## Appendix 3a

### **‘Women of the Spirit’ Research into Female Pentecostal Spirituality: Focus Group Participants**

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with any other parties (church or university).

The research project aims to understand the ‘spirituality’ of female members of Pentecostal Churches in the United Kingdom by means of focus groups and analysis of publicly available church information. At this stage in the research I am beginning to conduct focus groups in order to hear first-hand what people think and understand about Pentecostal spirituality I am particularly interested in your views as a woman. During this focus group, data will be collected by recording the conversation and by the researcher taking some notes.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions either before the focus group starts or afterwards. Once it has begun it would be best to let the focus group finish before raising any further questions regarding the project. I am happy to share the findings with you once the research is complete. Your name will not be associated with research findings in any way, and your identity as a participant in this focus group will be known only to the researcher, your fellow participants this afternoon.

There are very low risks, if any, associated with this study.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature of the project and its procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

---

Print Name

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

The Revd Marcia Clarke, Researcher in Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology, the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Department of Theology and Religion, the University of Birmingham.

## Appendix 3b

A study exploring the spirituality of the women of the  
New Testament Church of God

Women  
of the  
*Spirit*

### CONSENT FORM

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
3. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐☐☐

Please tick box

Yes

No

4. I agree to the focus group being audio recorded and written notes taken.
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications
6. I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised) and may be used for future research.
7. I am over 18 year old

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## Appendix 3c



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age :    18 – 28    ☐                      29 - 39    ☐                      40 - 50    ☐                      50 – 60    ☐                      61+    ☐

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been a Christian?

Less than 1 year                      ☐

1 – 3 years                                      ☐

4 – 6 years                                      ☐

7-10 years                                      ☐

10+ years                                      ☐

Please provide the area where your church is located e.g . Birmingham:

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the lead/senior pastor male or female? \_\_\_\_\_

How many female ministers are there in your church? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been attending NTCG?

Less than 1 year                      ☐

1 – 3 years                                      ☐

4 – 6 years                                      ☐

7-10 years                                      ☐

10+ years                                      ☐

On average how much time do you spend in church or doing directly church related activities?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours

Have you ever attended another non NTCG church for 2 or more years    Y                      N

## Appendix 4

### Topic Guide for Focus Group – Women of the Spirit

1. Introductions:
2. Would a couple of you like to share your story of how you became a Christian?
3. What were some of the important milestones for you in your Christian development?
4. What do you understand by the term ‘spirituality’?
5. How does your spirituality help you in everyday situations? If you can give specific examples.
6. Do you think female spirituality is different to that of men? How?
7. Are any of you aspiring to pastors/leader? What support are you getting?
8. Are there any final comments that you would like to make.

#### Supplemental questions

- a. What role do prayer/testimony/sermon /bible play in your life? Give an example of how prayer made a difference in a particular situation?
- b. Can a couple of you share your account of being ‘baptised in the Spirit’
- c. How do you nurture your spirituality?
- d. As far as you spirituality is concerned, do you have an individual/practice that plays a key role? How?
- e. What contribution have other women/men made to your Christian development?



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